DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 852 SP 029 390

AUTHOR Wildman, Terry M.; And Others
TITLE Beginning Teacher's Handbook.
INSTITUTION Virginia Polytechnic Inst. and State Univ., Blacksburg. Coll. of Education.
SPONS AGENCY Virginia State Dept. of Education, Richmond.
PUB DATE Jun 85
NOTE 191p.; For related document, see SP 029 388.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Development; Interprofessional Relationship; School Community Relationship; *Staff Development; State Programs; *Teacher Orientation
IDENTIFIERS *Beginning Teacher Assistance Program; *Beginning Teacher Induction; *Virginia

ABSTRACT

Intended for beginning teachers in Virginia, this handbook is designed to serve as a guide for negotiating the first few years of teaching. The concept of teacher as problem solver is promoted throughout the manual. The handbook is organized around the idea that the beginning teacher's main tasks are to: (1) discover how to learn from their own teaching experiences; (2) learn how to analyze and solve teaching problems; (3) develop an expanded teaching repertoire; and (4) develop a sound conception of teaching. The first two chapters build the basic rationale that teaching should be viewed as problem solving and that professional development depends on not getting "stuck" with an unnecessarily restricted teaching repertoire as a result of negotiating the survival period. Chapters 3 through 6 provide an orientation to the major problem areas most beginning teachers encounter--instruction, classroom management and discipline, beginning the school year, and development of professional relationships in the school and community. (CB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED286852

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H. L. Smith

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP029390

The preparation of this Handbook was funded through a contract from the Virginia Department of Education in conjunction with the Virginia Beginning Teacher Assistance Program. Inquiries about the program should be addressed to the Office of Personnel and Professional Development, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 6-Q, Richmond, VA 23216.

The views and opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Virginia Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the Department of Education should be inferred.

Beginning Teacher's Handbook

Terry M. Wildman
Hilda Borko

With the assistance of Sandra Moore, Beatrice Naff,
Sarah Simmons, Jane Sowers, and Maria Yon

Illustrations by George V. Wills
Technical Editing by Alan V. Sardella

Copyright © Pending

Terry M. Wildman, Principal Investigator,
Virginia Tech, College of Education, Blacksburg, VA 24061

June 1985

CONTENTS

Preface iii

Acknowledgments vii

CHAPTER

1 Learning to Teach 1

2 Teacher as Problem Solver 21

3 Instruction 51

4 Classroom Management and Discipline 103

5 Getting Started 134

6 A Few Words About Your Working Relationships 156

Preface

The Beginning Teacher's Handbook is designed to serve as a guide for negotiating the first year or two of teaching. The Handbook gives special attention to two aspects of the beginning years. The first is that beginning teachers are only just beginning to learn about teaching. Consequently, any induction experience must be designed to encourage and support continued professional growth. The second aspect of the induction experience concerns the manner in which new teachers learn about teaching. In the Handbook, we are promoting a conception of teacher as problem solver. This conception, or metaphor, recognizes that teaching is a difficult, complex task not easily reduced to sets of clear-cut rules or prescriptions. In response to this fact -- widely recognized in recent analyses of the teaching profession -- we have organized the Handbook around the idea that the beginning teacher's main tasks are: 1) to learn how to learn from their own teaching experiences; 2) to learn how to analyze and solve their own teaching problems; 3) to develop an expanded teaching repertoire; and 4) to develop a sound conception of teaching.

There is much "good news" to report in this Handbook. Most of it centers around the fact that educators are becoming increasingly able to specify how to plan and carry out classroom activities that produce desired results. We

have worked hard to develop some clear illustrations of the ideas and concepts that should help you to solve your own instructional problems.

While not intending to minimize this good news, we also want to share with you an honest appraisal of how difficult and complex classroom life can be (and usually is). One thing that contributes to the difficulty and complexity of teaching is that single best methods and techniques do not exist. Whether we're considering instruction, management, or any other aspect of teaching, the situation remains the same -- even "tried and true" approaches work only with some types of students and in some types of contexts. Your best protection against overwhelming frustration in dealing with these complexities is to develop good problem solving skills, and to continue to learn about the possibilities and limitations inherent in the methods and techniques derived from findings on effective teaching.

This Handbook is designed to influence your thinking about teaching in a realistic way:

First, we begin by emphasizing the positive theme that teachers can make a difference in the amount and quality of student learning;

Second, to provide realistic support for this theme, we attempt to give you some insight into the kinds of investigations that are yielding information useful to teachers. Special attention is given to

the major patterns of findings which have emerged from research over the past 10-15 years;

Third, we try to help you develop a sensitivity to some of the problems and limitations inherent in the use of research findings to improve your teaching;

Fourth, we promote the idea that the major themes concerning effective teaching can be best understood in the context of models of teaching. A model can be thought of simply as a way to organize the essential teaching functions which occur during a lesson or some other teaching episode; and

Fifth, we promote the idea of teachers working to expand their repertoires by acquiring multiple ways of organizing and presenting instruction and managing classrooms. Different approaches are summarized in the Handbook, each of which has proven useful for particular educational purposes.

In terms of organization, Chapters 1 and 2 build the basic rationale that you should view teaching as problem solving and that your future growth as a teacher depends on not getting "stuck" with an unnecessarily restricted teaching repertoire as a result of negotiating the survival period.

Chapters 3 through 6 provide an orientation to the major "problem" areas that you will encounter as a beginning

teacher. Chapter 3 focuses on instruction; Chapter 4 on classroom management and discipline; Chapter 5 on beginning the school year; and Chapter 6 deals with the development of professional relationships in the school and community.

Our goal is that the Handbook will help you think productively about your teaching. Your professional growth is important enough to deserve careful handling.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation to several people whose support and assistance was essential to the completion of this project.

Five doctoral students within the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Sandra Moore, Beatrice Naff, Sarah Simmons, Jane Sowers, and Maria Yon were helpful in shaping our ideas by sharing freely their considerable experience as professional educators and supervisors of student teachers. We appreciate their efforts and helpful reactions to our work.

Dr. Joe Harding deserves special thanks for lending his expertise as an Applied Anthropologist during the research phase of this project. His report of interviews with school principals gave us a rich data source for inclusion in Chapter 6.

Finally, our deepest appreciation and gratitude is extended to Bonnie Guthrie, Mila Moore, and Sonja Stone for their tireless effort and almost magical ability to transform seemingly impossible written drafts and endless revisions into the format presented here.

TMW
HB

EVALUATION

Beginning Teacher's Handbook

Your responses would be most helpful in evaluating this handbook. After you have used the handbook for a school year, please return this evaluation by June 1.

The evaluation form has been designed as a mailer for your convenience. Fold along the dotted lines on the reverse side, affix a 22¢ stamp, and staple or tape the flyer. The return address has been preprinted.

1. How much of this book have you read?

   _____ All of it
   _____ Approximately 3/4
   _____ Approximately 1/2
   _____ Approximately 1/4
   _____ None

2. Did you receive help in the use of this handbook? _____Yes _____No
   If your answer is "yes," please explain the type of help you received.

3. How helpful has the information been to you in your first year of teaching?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at All Helpful					Extremely Helpful

4. How much will you be likely to use the handbook in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at All					Very Much

5. It would be very helpful to us to have your suggestions for improving the handbook. Please comment on the following:

   What do you consider the most valuable aspects of the handbook?

   What aspects do you consider the least valuable?

   Other comments:

   It you are willing for us to follow up on any of your comments, please include:

   _____ Name

   _____ School Division

   _____ School

   ( ) _____ Telephone

Cut along this line.

TO: Mrs. Nancy C. Vance
Associate Director
Professional Development and Beginning
Teacher Assistance Program
Virginia Department of Education
P. O. Box 6Q
Richmond, VA 23216

Chapter 1

Learning to Teach

What happens when a beginning teacher stands in front of a class and faces, for the first time, the total reality and full responsibility of teaching? For most teachers, it is safe to say that a whole variety of conflicting and overwhelming thoughts and emotions are brought to the surface. How will I do? What will they think of me? Am I ready? What will I do if any of a number of "worst scenarios" actually happens? Under such circumstances, it is the rare teacher who does not experience moments of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. What is at stake, quite simply, is personal survival: Will I be able to endure and get through this?

Somehow, most beginning teachers do manage to get through the first day, the first week, and eventually the first year of teaching. Until recently, however, there has been very little attention paid to the questions of <u>how</u> the transition is made and what the residual effects might be. Under increased scrutiny, two aspects of the induction experience have surfaced as being particularly disturbing. The first is that very little is done in education either to specifically prepare teachers for the <u>beginning experience</u> or to help them through it. For the most part, the responsibility for getting through the first year of teaching has been shouldered almost totally by the beginning teacher. A second concern to emerge is that the stakes for the

beginning teacher, and the profession, may be quite a bit higher than the drive for simple survival (I made it through the year!) would suggest.

Consider what happens during the first few months of teaching. In addition to solving a great variety of mundane management chores, the new teacher is also engaged in the critical process of putting into place a basic teaching style. When you think about teaching styles it is important to note that, once established, they are remarkably resistant to change. If, as researchers have recently pointed out, the new teacher adopts an effective approach -- especially one that encourages continued learning -- then there is little cause for concern. If, on the other hand, the induction experience leaves the beginner with a less than satisfactory approach to teaching -- especially a rigid one not conducive to further development -- then there <u>is</u> cause for concern. The induction experience -- the first full year of teaching -- is seen then as a major shaping influence in the development of a teacher. In fact, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that induction marks the point at which a teacher begins in earnest to learn how to teach. As Herbert Kohl (1976) puts it in his book <u>On Teaching</u>, "the essentials of learning to teach begin when one has the responsibility for a class or group of young people. At that point, it begins to be possible to know what resources are needed, what questions need to be answered by more experienced teachers, and what skills one needs" (p. 11).

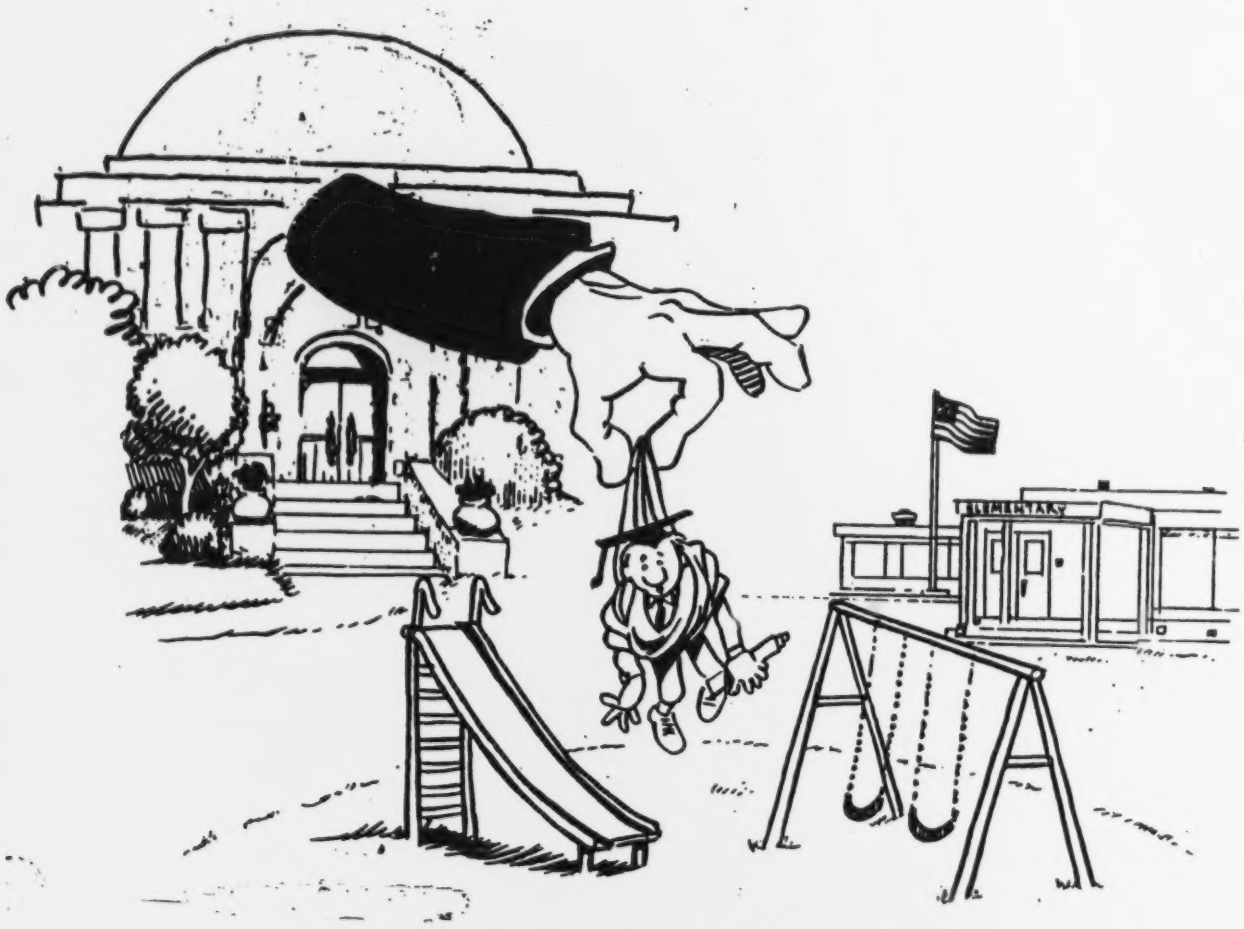
The purpose of this chapter is to influence your view of the the critical first year of teaching, and to reveal some of the more important variables which enhance or detract from the beginner's chances of making a successful transition into the profession. Four basic questions or issues provide a framework for the chapter.

1. What are the circumstances under which new teachers enter their first full-time teaching experience?
2. What is the nature of the beginner's adjustment to teaching?
3. How do new teachers acquire competence?
4. What does it mean to become a learning teacher?

We hope you will leave this chapter with a greater sensitivity to the importance of the first year (or two) of teaching as well as a better sense of the way in which beginning teachers struggle to make the transition. As we have implied, the heart of this analysis is the notion that successful, well adjusted teachers are learning teachers.

Entry into the Profession

Here you are! With your entry into the teaching profession you have just made an abrupt change from one formal setting to another. Just how abrupt the change can be is depicted in Figure 1.1. We admit this version of the transition from student to teacher may be a bit exaggerated, but the illustration does serve as a cue for raising some important questions about the process by which novices are inducted into teaching.



"OK, you're on your own now. Ready to start your first year?"

Figure 1.1

One major problem, which has come to the forefront in recent years, lends some credibility to the illustration shown in Figure 1.1. The problem, essentially, is that teaching has been viewed for decades as a relatively commonplace, easy to learn task. According to this view, novices quickly acquire the appropriate skills and knowledge (usually within a relatively brief formal

training program), and then are "dropped into" the workplace, presumably as a "finished" product.

One of the basic implications of the notion that teaching is easy to master is that novices require relatively little attention in getting started. Remarkably, education stands out among almost all other professions as one in which novices are left pretty much to solve their own induction problems. Indeed, education is also one of the few professions in which the novice is expected to take on full responsibilities (sometimes even the worst class) from the outset. Sink or swim is the term sometimes used to describe such circumstances.

In Figure 1.2, we illustrate what is frequently depicted in the literature as a typical "first day" for a beginning teacher. As shown, the atmosphere may be outwardly warm and supportive (as it should be), but the bottom line is that teaching can be a lonely profession, even from the very beginning. The full meaning of the term "sink or swim" is powerfully felt as the beginner faces the myriad responsibilities and tasks of teaching alone. Indeed, if you could observe the beginning experiences of teachers across the nation, the conditions of teaching for novices would rarely be distinguishable from those of experts. On the whole, very little systematic attention has been given to the possibility that the needs of experienced and novice teachers may be fundamentally different. The message is that teaching is

a. I would like first to present our new teacher, Ms. Ida Carealot.

b. Remember that Friendship High's central purpose is to work hand in glove with students and parents, and to build a sense of academic community.

c. "Where did everybody go?"

d. "When does the 'working with others' part come in?"

Figure 1.2

something you can learn on your own in a relatively short period of time. But we all know that's not true.

Making the Adjustment to Teaching

In looking at the adjustment problems of beginning teachers, it is apparent that novices have particular characteristics that

should be taken into consideration as they enter the profession. One recent account (Burden, 1981; cited in Nemser, 1983) suggests the following characteristics as a reasonable "profile" of average beginning teachers:

- o Limited knowledge of teaching activities
- o Limited knowledge of the teaching environment
- o Subject-centered approach to the curriculum and to teaching
- o Conformity to the image of teacher as authority
- o Limited professional insights and perceptions
- o Feelings of uncertainty, confusion and insecurity
- o Unwillingness to try new teaching methods.

Novices may possess considerable "book knowledge" about teaching, but self confidence and flexibility require successful negotiation of numerous personal adjustments which must be made "on the job." The sheer number of decisions which must be made -- endless student questions, assignments (incomplete assignments...excuses), grading, parent contacts, school policies and regulations -- all contribute to a feeling of strangeness and uneasiness in an environment (the classroom of all places!) which should be familiar territory. Given the limitations described in the above profile, the fact that beginners are frantically trying to balance essentially the same responsibilities and demands as their more experienced colleagues, these decisions and adjustments are particularly difficult to make.

One typical reaction to the pressures of beginning teaching is simply to probe in many directions for answers to problems. In Figure 1.3 we have utilized a "fishing" analogy to suggest that beginners engage in considerable "casting about" for techniques that work. Trial and error is another way of describing the same activity. Using such an approach, the novice will undoubtedly "discover" solutions to problems. But as researchers and analysts are increasingly beginning to argue, there are some "hidden costs" as well.

Figure 1.3 "Fishing" for workable teaching techniques?

Studies of the student teaching component of teacher training programs have recently pointed to problems with experience based learning. Virtually no one will argue against the notion that teacher trainees need a taste of reality in learning to teach. However, the prospective teacher's brush with reality does not necessarily achieve the results intended. For example, recent studies have shown that the student teaching

experience often promotes a very conservative image of teaching -- one closely aligned with the school bureaucracy in which the training occurs. Under the conditions imposed by most student teaching arrangements, "lofty ideals" quickly give way to a conception of teaching oriented more toward discipline and keeping children busy. As Sharon Nemser (1983) has pointed out, we have largely ignored John Dewey's warning against a dependency on field experience as a primary basis for learning to teach. Dewey's (1904/1965) concern is that the prospective teacher tends to make his/her teaching adjustments "not to the principles he is acquiring, but to what he sees succeed and fail in an empirical way from moment to moment." As we will discuss further in a subsequent section, the results could be a narrowing of vision as well as acquisition of faulty habits.

In addition to the mixed blessings of experience based learning, prior knowledge also plays an important role in the beginner's adjustment to teaching. As Nemser (1983) again points out, we often make the mistake of assuming that one learns to be a teacher primarily through formal training. One influence that is sometimes totally overlooked is the 12-15 <u>thousand</u> hours of observational learning which occurs during the 12+ years of prior schooling (see Figure 1.4). What is currently not understood very well is the extent to which these extensive informal influences are "activated" at some later point. In other words, do teachers tend to teach the way they were taught <u>themselves</u>?

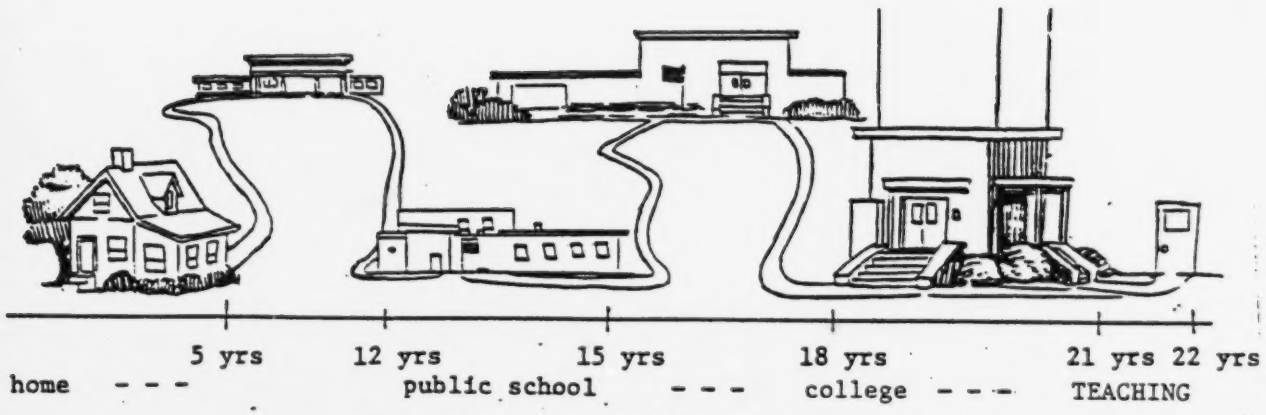


Figure 1.4 Your college education provides only a fraction of the ideas you bring into teaching.

The evidence that is available suggests that many teachers will, under pressure, imitate models of teaching that have been internalized through years of observation. Such imitation, of course, is not necessarily bad. What is troublesome, however, is that the learning which occurs tends to be driven more by personality (I still remember my 6th grade teacher!) and intuition than by the acquisition of pedagogical principles. As we have shown in Figure 1.4, it is probably unrealistic to think that a relatively brief formal training experience (some coursework plus student teaching) will be successful in converting such a massive dose of experience into any coherent pedagogical framework.

Acquiring Competence Through Teaching

With so much to learn during the first few years of teaching, the way in which you acquire competence during that time is a matter of considerable importance. We have suggested in the above section that you will naturally use trial and error and that you will also fall back on techniques which represent, in your experience, the way it's "spozed" to be. Given that these observations have some validity for you, what are the implications for growth as a teacher?

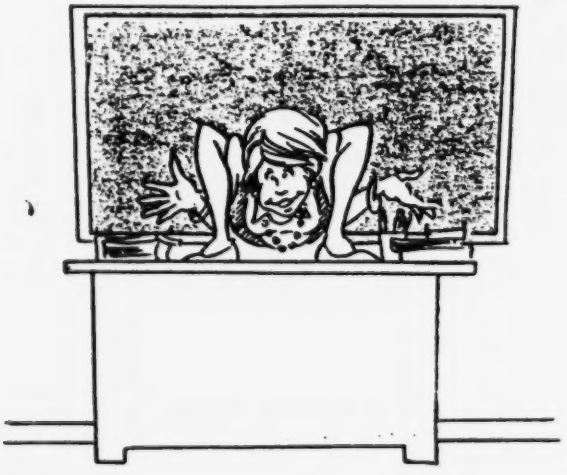
One thing that might help you think about these issues is an analogy which illustrates one of the big problems with experience based (trial and error) learning. Consider the problem of learning to play the game of golf. Ideally, you would acquire through specific training (e.g., going to your local pro) the "theoretical" foundations of this complex motor task. Such a foundation of skills and understandings would provide the essential basis for further growth. On the other hand, many of us learn the game simply by "picking it up." Basically, what we try to do is model other golfers we have seen and then adjust our style according to what works (see Figure 1.5). The problem, of course, is that over time it is possible to acquire a style that is not only unusual but counterproductive in that it actually precludes the attainment of excellence.

Figure 1.5 If this is your style, you'll never make the pro circuit!

Beginning teachers, suddenly thrust into a complex environment without adequate support, find themselves in the same position as the trial and error golfer. Basic teaching styles will emerge over time which are essentially contingency shaped. That is, <u>what works</u> will tend to be adopted, and what does not

work will tend to be discarded. The teacher in Figure 1.6, for example, has found a workable way of getting students' attention, but we doubt her "discovery" marks the route to excellence.

As we know from the psychology of human development (remember Piaget?), growth depends on action. But action or experience alone does not promote growth. What is required, in addition, is reflection on experience (How do you think about what you do?). Consider again our hard working young teacher in Figure 1.6. What she learns through trial and error is that it is possible to get the students' attention if you're willing to



"Class? Class! I'm a frog now."

Figure 1.6 There are many ways to get the students' attention, but not all of them are conducive to learning.

strike a ridiculous pose (perhaps yelling at students would work also...or pulling a rabbit from a hat). On the other hand, the very same students who've just been amazed (embarrassed?) by our young teacher in Figure 1.6 will pay rapt attention to the veteran teacher next period who rarely seems to raise her voice or do anything "catchy." What gives? For the young teacher, the "discrepancy" between her own performance and that of the veteran colleague represents a form of cognitive conflict (disequilibrium in the Piagetian sense) that somehow must get resolved. A very good growth potential exists, assuming the novice is willing to reflect on the dilemma, and get help in bringing to bear some new perspectives on the problem. Ideally, we would like to see this teacher take some risks, give up some old and familiar ways, and get on with some experiments that will yield the information necessary to develop a more complete conception of how to capture and hold student attention.

Taking the above arguments into consideration, it is relatively easy to see that more is at stake during the induction year of teaching than simple survival. Because newly acquired teaching styles are difficult to change, it becomes very important to foster an attitude of continued learning from the very beginning. Obviously, new teachers will do whatever is necessary to survive (i.e., "I will live through this"). But continued growth may depend (as we argued above) on giving up the very techniques that enable you to get through a particularly

rough day or an early transition period. This idea is so important that you will see it reflected time and again in the Handbook.

Becoming a Learning Teacher

One of the pitfalls of teaching that you need to be aware of right away is that the possibilities for professional stagnation seem to be much greater in education than in many other professional fields. Teachers are essentially isolated in their work; learning from experience is given clear precedence over the use of a scientific (theoretical or empirical) knowledge base and opportunities for continued learning are generally fragmented and only minimally supported.

Gary Sykes (1983) proposed recently in an analysis for the Kappan that teaching is perhaps the only profession in which an increase in knowledge is associated with an actual reduction in the intellectual power of individual practitioners to solve their own problems. His argument was not that the rapidly growing knowledge base in education was faulty -- rather he was talking about the way in which knowledge is used in education. Historically, knowledge has been used in education to compensate for perceived weaknesses among the work force. In order to bolster productivity (i.e., students' academic achievement) teachers have been given methods and techniques which others have derived for them. In both elementary and secondary schools the curriculum has become increasingly prescriptive in some areas,

leaving relatively little room for teachers' instructional decisions. Teachers, for the most part, are not encouraged to engage in autonomous, entrepreneurial work. Rather, they are encouraged to toe the line, to stick to the dictates of the bureaucracy, and to maintain the status quo.

Interestingly, visions for how to promote professional growth and excitement among teachers and other school staff may be coming not from the study of educational practices per se, but from the study of progress within the domain of business and industry. Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman (1982) in their best-seller <u>In Search of Excellence</u>, have shown how the nation's most successful and fastest growing business enterprises have benefitted from some relatively new management doctrines. The forms of stagnation found so routinely in education are similarly pervasive in business and industry. Yet some companies have found ways to get around the problem. Excellent companies, Peters and Waterman have found, are <u>learning organizations</u> in which seeds of evolution are deliberately sown and nurtured. These companies promote constant interaction among professionals, create and maintain information rich environments, and <u>expect</u> experimentation and provisional tries. Risk-taking is encouraged, and mistakes are seen not as disasters, but as sources of information.

One particularly intriguing notion is the concept of <u>cheap learning</u>. Companies that promote a culture of constant

experimentation and innovation find that the organization learns less expensively than through elaborate research and staff development. Through small experimentation, ideas are tested and "bugs" worked out long before massive amounts of time, energy, and money are invested. Such a concept -- cheap learning -- seems imminently useful in education with our long history of failure with expensive, large scale social experiments.

Clearly it is possible to imagine an education scenario in which learning, experimenting and growing are primary goals. The dialogue shown in Figure 1.7 (adapted from Nemser's introduction to her chapter on learning to teach) suggests that learning can provide the motivation to persist in teaching over the years. Some teachers apparently see the possibilities spontaneously and

"30 years in the classroom! How have you kept from 'burning out'?"
"By continuing to learn, of course. This profession will never stop teaching you!"
"But I don't get it...Once you know how to teach, what else is there to learn?"
"Can we talk?"

Figure 1.7

manage to continue learning within the existing bureaucracy of the schools. For others, the schools will have to create better environments for learning. Among the suggestions which have appeared from numerous sources are the following:

1) Schools must find ways of promoting more interaction and talk among teachers about the practice of teaching;

2) Teachers must have more opportunities to observe others teaching and to give and get feedback from colleagues;

3) Teachers should have a major part in the design of teaching methods and materials;

4) Administrators and teachers must find ways to enhance the norms of "collegiality" -- to promote the idea that each individual's professional development is the responsibility of the staff as a whole;

5) Schools must explicitly acknowledge teachers as professionals and support their efforts to grow and learn; and

6) Schools must actively attempt to reduce the isolation that characterizes the teaching profession.

To the above suggestions we offer one additional major idea. Teachers and other school staff need to develop new metaphors through which to examine their behavior. The metaphor of teacher as <u>technician</u> has persisted in education for decades. Under the conception of teacher as technician, a myth has been promulgated that it is possible to discover <u>best</u> ways to teach and thus dictate to teachers the actions they should take. Many analysts believe that even today we are not far removed from Franklin Bobbitt's (1913) proposal that teachers (like bricklayers) must be "kept supplied with detailed instructions as to the work to be

done, the standards to be reached, the methods to be employed, and the appliances to be used" (p. 91).

The Handbook echoes recent concern that the metaphor of teacher as technician can no longer be tolerated. In its place we are promoting a different metaphor -- that of teacher as problem solver. Such a metaphor reflects more accurately the nature of the task that teachers face than does a technological conception of teaching.

Thinking about teaching as problem solving emphasizes the notion that your major job as a beginning teacher is to continue learning about teaching. In the following chapter you will encounter a particular framework for understanding problem solving. Using this framework as a springboard we will proceed in the remaining chapters to explore the major functions of teaching.

References
Chapter 1

Bobbitt, F. (1913). The supervision of city schools: Some general principles of management applied to the problems of city-school systems. In the Twelfth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Bloomington, IL.

Burden, P. (1981). Teachers' perceptions of their personal and professional development. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Educational Research Association, Des Moines, Iowa.

Dewey, J. (1904/1965). The relation to theory to practice in education. In M. Borrowman (Ed.), Teacher education in America: A documentary history. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kohl, H. (1976). On teaching. New York: Schocken Books.

Nemser, S. F. (1983). Learning to teach. In L. S. Shulman and G. Sykes (Eds.), Handbook of teaching and policy. New York: Longman, Inc.

Peters, T., & Waterman, R. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run corporations. New York: Warner Books, Inc.

Sykes, G. (1983). Contradictions, ironies, and promises unfilled: A contemporary account of the status of teaching. Phi Delta Kappan, 65, 87-93.

Chapter 2

Teacher as Problem Solver

Introduction

In Chapter 1, we adopted the metaphor of teacher as problem solver as an organizing framework for the Handbook. This metaphor highlights our belief that your actions in classrooms should be guided by reflective, systematic thinking about teaching and learning processes. Specifically, this view suggests that the ways in which you (1) define a problem; (2) gather, organize, interpret, and evaluate information relevant to the problem; and (3) use that information to develop a solution to the problem, will affect your actions in the classroom. As we said in Chapter 1, thinking about teaching as problem solving will help you to take the kinds of steps that will keep you learning and growing as a teacher.

Before getting into a particular approach to problem solving, we would like to explain in more detail our selection of the "teacher as problem solver" metaphor. We hope that this discussion will show you how important it is to view teaching as problem solving. We hope also that you will spend some time and energy working on improving your problem solving skills, particularly as they apply to classroom teaching.

Major Advantages

We see four major advantages to the problem solving metaphor. These advantages, elaborated in the following paragraphs, are listed below.

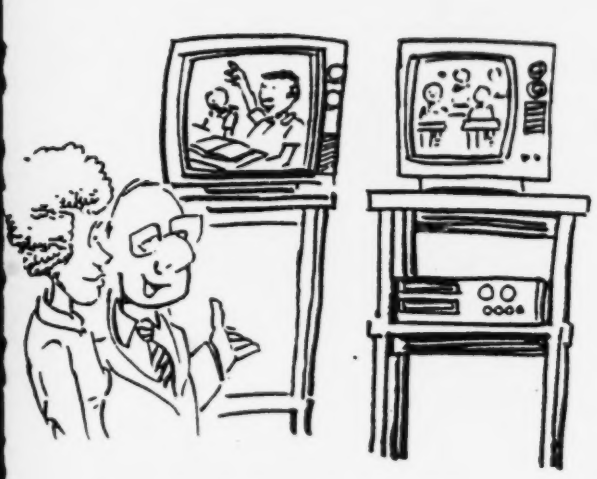
1. Problem solving encompasses all aspects of teaching.
2. It fits with the view of teachers as professionals.
3. It fits with the complexities of classroom life.
4. Better problem solving makes for better teaching.

First, because problem solving models tend to have wide applicability, the metaphor easily encompasses all of your roles as a teacher -- instructor, facilitator of learning, classroom organizer, behavior manager, disciplinarian, counselor, etc. Problems will arise in all of these roles. By approaching each role from a problem solving perspective, you can enhance your ability to implement that role.

Secondly, the metaphor promotes the view of teachers as professionals because it gives a clear message that teachers are thinking, reasoning persons who are responsible for making decisions in classrooms. As you will recall from the previous chapter, this metaphor contrasts sharply with a view of "teacher as technician" -- which implies that teachers are expected to implement rules and procedures defined by others.

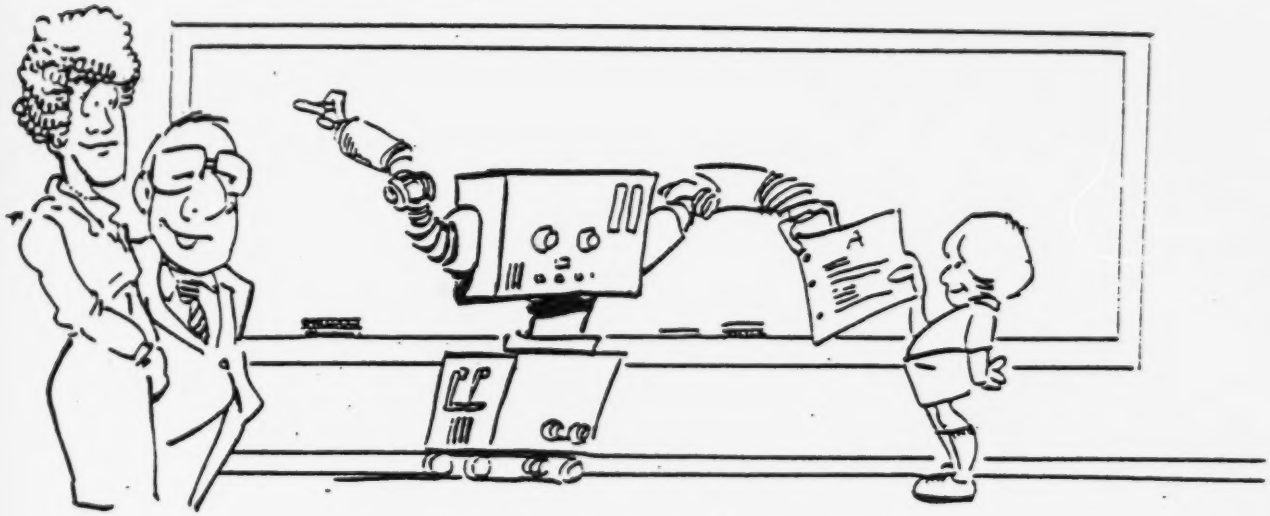
Members of the Boston Women's Teachers' group (Sara Freedman and colleagues, 1983) dramatically point out the contradictions that arise when teachers are hired as professionals but treated as technicians. As they note, our public education system supposedly prepares students for adulthood in a democratic society which expects citizens to engage in critical thinking. Yet, the system often gives teachers the message that they are

"Make sure you get a good count."



"From this remote station, we can monitor each classroom."

"You might say I run a pretty tight school here!"



"We're working on the perfect teacher."

Figure 2.1 The view of "teacher as technician" could never reach this absurd limit . . . or could it?

Figure 2.2 Classrooms are complex and busy places. This teacher doesn't know where to devote his attention next!

incapable of this type of mature judgment themselves, especially when they are required to pursue this goal by increasingly mechanical, technical means. By denying teachers a portion of their freedom to think and act independently, the view of teacher as technician seems counterproductive. In fact, education

philosopher Gary Fenstermacher (1980) suggests that such a view has a very debilitating effect on teachers' perceptions of their status and competence. By contrast, the view of teacher as problem solver stresses the importance of critical thinking, and acting in accordance with one's thoughts. This conception, then, promotes teachers' growth as professionals and enhances their self-perceptions of competence.

Third, as you begin to teach, you will see that the problem solving metaphor fits with the realities of classroom life. Classrooms are complex places (see Figure 2.2) in which a lot is happening (and happening very quickly). What goes on in classrooms is determined by many factors -- among them are the teacher, the students, goals and objectives of an activity, availability of instructional materials, and institutional constraints. Every situation is unique -- recipes will not work! There is no strategy which is appropriate for all goals, all students and all settings -- a message we have tried to convey in Figure 2.3. There are, of course, some strategies that have a high probability of bringing about desired goals. Even these, however, are most appropriately implemented after careful consideration of the entire situation (i.e., as a result of engaging in problem-solving).

Finally, we selected the metaphor of teacher as problem solver because we believe that teachers who adopt this metaphor

"Gosh, Freddy, that Math class of yours looks downright nauseated."

"Yes, I've just served them the latest recipe to come out of educational research: 'Fractions á la Confusion!'"

Figure 2.3 This is an all-too-common result of methods being forced into the classroom.

and seriously attempt to work on their problem solving skills in the domain of teaching will become better problem solvers and, therefore, better teachers. Problem solving can be learned! And we hope that the Handbook will help you to become aware of the basic processes we use when solving problems, and to consciously apply these processes to classroom life. By continually applying these processes, your chances of becoming a learning, growing teacher are considerably enhanced.

A Model of Problem Solving

There are many models of human problem-solving. They have originated or been developed in such diverse fields as cognitive psychology, management, and research on teaching. While the various types of models differ in some ways, they typically have certain features in common: identification of a problem, definition of the problem, determination of a possible solution, and implementation and evaluation of that solution. It is through recognition of these common threads that we chose the model described below as a framework for our discussion of teacher problem solving.

The problem solving model we selected is a very general one, recently developed by John Bransford and Barry Stein (1984). It is presented in their book, The IDEAL problem solver: A guide for improving thinking, learning, and creativity. This model is summarized in the acronym "IDEAL," coined by the authors to

capture the essential phases of problem solving. These phases are:

I -- identify the problem

D -- define and represent the problem

E -- explore possible strategies

A -- act on the strategies

L -- look back and evaluate effects of your activities.

This acronym will form the basis of our discussion. While the model appears very simple, it can be difficult to implement. There are many issues to be considered in each phase, and there is no one way to approach any phase. Before exploring some of these complexities, we will examine how the model and its phases fit with the phases of teaching, as they are typically conceived.

Problem Solving and the Teaching Process

Phil Jackson (1968), in his book Life in Classrooms, described teaching as consisting of three components: preactive, interactive, and postactive. Preactive teaching is that component which occurs "in the empty classroom," before the students arrive. During preactive teaching, we plan instructional activities, gather required materials, arrange the physical environment, and generally prepare for the actual instructional episodes. Interactive teaching is the component which occurs when we are "face to face with students." It is the actual experience of working with students to help them

accomplish the tasks of learning. Postactive teaching occurs "after the fact." It is that time during which we reflect on what has transpired -- we think about what worked and didn't work, and begin to outline what we would do differently next time. Figure 2.4 depicts what we think is a reasonable example of a teacher's thought processes within each phase.

Typically, the first three phases of problem solving (identifying and defining the problem, and determining a potential solution) occur during preactive teaching, the fourth (trying out the plan) during interactive teaching, and the fifth (evaluating the solution's success) during postactive teaching. While this view works as a general model, the steps are actually too simplistic. As we shall see in our elaboration of the IDEAL model, we typically cycle through the entire model, or portions of the model, several times as we work toward the solution to a problem. In other words, problem solving is not a linear process. In working on a classroom problem, the teacher typically will cycle through defining the problem (step 2) and exploring possible solutions (step 3) until an initial plan is developed. Inevitably, unforeseen problems will arise as the plan is implemented (step 4) during interactive teaching. For a serious problem solver, these problems will signal a need to reconsider possible solutions (step 3) and possibly revise the plan.

"OK, let's see ... we did this yesterday and the children seemed somewhat confused. I need to go back and explain the concept in a different way."

"Well, he seems to be getting it. This is working a little better than yesterday's techniques."

"These papers are actually better! I can go ahead with the new material, but I'll have to be careful not to go too quickly."

Figure 2.4 These are typical of the thought processes which take place during preactive, interactive, and postactive teaching.

Consider, for example, a teacher who encounters difficulty when teaching long division for the first time. Although he has planned extensively, several students do not understand his initial explanation. Since the problem is immediate and decisions must be made quickly, revisions in plans typically are of a fine-tuning nature (I'd better go over several additional examples). Although the teacher may explore new strategies (How can I explain long division differently?) or even redefine the problem (Some children need to review division facts) during interactive teaching, these processes may differ from the problem solving which occurs during preactive teaching. Our major point, however, is that the problem solving metaphor applies to the entire scope of the teaching process, and can help us to understand and improve all components of teaching.

Phases of Problem Solving

In the sections that follow we examine each phase in the IDEAL problem solving model. We will focus on objectives to be accomplished, issues to consider, strategies to employ, and possible pitfalls that may arise. Before proceeding to these discussions, however, several introductory comments are in order. First, you may have noticed that we have neglected to deal with one issue central to the entire problem solving framework -- namely, exactly what is a problem? And what is meant by solving a problem? Not surprisingly, we adopt a very broad definition of problems in the Handbook. Following many experts on problem

solving, we say that a problem exists whenever the present situation is different from the desired situation (the goal). To state it somewhat differently, a problem exists when what you have isn't what you want (see Figure 2.5). Problem solving is the process of attempting to move from the present situation (what you have) to the desired situation (what you want). The greater the distance between what you have and what you want, the

Figure 2.5 A problem exists when there is a discrepancy between an existing situation and a desired situation.

larger the problem. Also, the more uncertain the route, the more difficult the problem is to solve.

When we adopt this definition, it becomes clear that problems are an inevitable part of our daily lives. Problems are not necessarily bad, nor are they to be avoided. In fact, we suggest that one important way to improve your teaching is to actively seek out problems to be solved. In other words, you should look for aspects of your lives as teachers that are less than ideal, and work in these areas to move closer to the ideal.

One key to becoming a successful problem solver is to maintain a positive attitude toward problem solving and a commitment to seeking out and tackling (not avoiding) difficult, important problems. To be an effective problem solver, you must be confident of your ability to solve problems, and you must be willing to make mistakes.

Keep in mind that problem solving is not a neat linear process with distinct rules to follow at each step to ensure success. The boundaries between the five phases of the IDEAL model are fuzzy -- many activities could be included in more than one phase. As you work toward the solution of a problem, you will frequently recycle through the entire model (and various portions of it) several times. In fact, if you are able to reach a solution by proceeding straight through the five phases, you

probably have not spent enough time, at least in the initial three phases of the process.

Identifying the Problem

During the first phase of problem solving, your primary goal is to find a problem to be solved. Unfortunately, this task is often overlooked. Why? Because people do not stop to think about the possibility of improving various situations in their lives. We tend to take inconveniences and unpleasant situations for granted, viewing them as inevitable parts of our lives. How can a person change this state of affairs? Perhaps the most important advice is to cultivate the attitude (mentioned above) that problems are not bad. In fact, they are a major vehicle for personal growth and improvement and, for this reason, should be actively sought.

In order to identify problems, you must know what you want. And, you must recognize that what you have isn't what you want. As a teacher, you must first clarify the goals and objectives for your teaching.

One strategy for identifying problems is to create a "bug list." When your life as a teacher seems to be going smoothly, set aside some time to think about how it might go even better. Generate a list of things that bug you -- parts of the curriculum with which you are dissatisfied, activities that are somewhat boring or uncreative, students who could be trying a little

harder. Typical items on a bug list might include, "The New Math is impossible -- I may never understand it myself," or "It would be nice if Freddy did his homework at least once this grading cycle." This list will serve as the basis for identifying and prioritizing problems to tackle.

Try viewing all of your classroom decisions and actions from a problem solving perspective. Each instructional objective can be thought of as a problem to be solved. As you translate your general task "to teach" into more specific tasks such as "I have to plan and teach a unit on Virginia history," use this translation to identify the specific instructional problem to be solved.

Defining the Problem

In the second phase of problem solving, your task is to come up with a clear statement of the problem. This might appear to be a simple task, without much room for variation or creativity. But all problems can be represented in more than one way, and the way in which you represent or define a problem is crucial -- it guides you onto a particular problem solving path. Your definition (or problem conception) will lead you to focus on certain aspects of the problem, while ignoring others. It will limit the set of possible solutions you consider. As Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld (1938) wrote, "The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill."

We cannot caution you too strongly to avoid jumping to conclusions about what the problem is. Be sure to attempt to get a broad perspective on the problem by describing it in detail. Think about all possible causes, and consider all possible impacts and influences. Also, ask yourself whether you are making assumptions about the nature of the problem (see Figure 2.6) that will limit your ability to find or generate solutions.

Figure 2.6 What <u>is</u> the problem?

In his book New Think, Edward de Bono (1967) uses a metaphor of digging holes to illustrate the distinction between vertical thinking (proceeding systematically from a single concept or definition) and lateral thinking (seeking alternative ways of defining or interpreting a problem) at this stage of the problem solving process. He suggests that a person should engage in lateral thinking by "digging many shallow holes," or constructing many possible problem definitions, before selecting the single hole to dig deeper or problem definition to explore further. He warns that the vertical thinker who selects a single spot -- and immediately begins digging a deep hole -- runs the risk of digging in the wrong place. Once a person begins digging a deep hole, that person will probably be unwilling to start over in a different hole or with a different problem definition. de Bono warns: "...if the hole is in the wrong place, then no amount of improvement is going to put it in the right place. No matter how obvious this may seem to every digger, it is still easier to go on digging in the same place than to start all over again in a new place."

There are many examples within the literature on problem solving that illustrate the importance of careful attention to the problem definition phase. One of our favorites is the automation of tomato picking, which we have attempted to depict visually in Figure 2.7. Several years ago, scientists developed a machine to pick tomatoes. Unfortunately, the machine did not

Figure 2.7 In our tomato picking example, the problem was first viewed as a faulty tomato picking machine, and then as a tomato that needed "toughening up." The second problem conception led to a solution.

work as well as farmers had hoped -- it picked tomatoes but crushed them in the process. Identification of the problem was fairly straightforward -- tomatoes were being crushed and therefore ruined in the picking process. Farmers and scientists defined the problem as a need to modify the picking machine so that it would be more gentle. Several versions were developed; each was unsuccessful. Finally, after much frustration, someone redefined the problem. The machine was not too rough; rather, the tomatoes were too delicate. As a result of this re-definition, a strain of tomatoes with tougher skins was developed. These tomatoes, currently found on most supermarket shelves, can be picked by machine without being crushed. One of our colleagues, however, refers to these as leather-skinned tomatoes -- the solution to one problem, of course, can cause others.

A second example comes from the field of psychology. Ivan Pavlov, known primarily for his work on classical conditioning,

began his professional career as a physiologist. His program of research focused on the digestive system and, in particular, the role of salivation. Unfortunately, his experiments were consistently ruined because his subjects (dogs) began to salivate as soon as he entered the laboratory, before he had a chance to give them food. Pavlov could have defined the problem as one of getting the dogs to stop salivating upon his entry into the laboratory. Instead, he represented it as a problem of understanding why they began to salivate when they did. This led him to focus on an entirely new area of research, and ultimately resulted in his formulation of the theory of classical conditioning.

We hope these examples have convinced you of the dramatic impact problem definition can have on subsequent phases of problem solving and, therefore, on the nature of the solution. Can the effects be as dramatic in education as well? We are convinced that the answer is yes. The following hypothetical examples support our position.

Imagine that there is a child in your class who is constantly acting out (see Figure 2.8). He is the class clown who continually interrupts instruction with jokes, irrelevant comments, and a variety of humorous antics. Again, the problem is easily identified -- the child's present behavior differs from behavior you would like him to demonstrate. You might define the problem as one of eliminating the inappropriate behavior. Such a

Figure 2.8 A problem can usually be defined in a variety of ways.

definition would lead you to consider behavior change strategies such as extinction (ignoring the undesired behavior) and punishment. Alternatively, you might define the problem as one of helping him to behave in appropriate ways. This would lead you to focus on reinforcement strategies such as praise and extra free time, to reward him for exhibiting desired behaviors. Taking a very different tack, you might decide that the child is acting out because he is bored with assignments that are too easy for him. Then you would consider instructional strategies such as providing him with more challenging individualized

assignments, rather than using behavior management strategies such as reinforcement and punishment.

As a final example, consider the unit on Virginia history which was used to illustrate problem identification in the previous section. There are many ways to represent the problem of planning and teaching this unit. For instance, your problem definition (goals and objectives for the unit) might focus on students' memorization of important facts in the Commonwealth's history. Or you may decide that the primary purpose of the unit is to help students understand why Virginia has played the role it has in our country's history. A third possibility is that you might wish to promote the development of social skills through discussions and cooperative group assignments. Clearly, these diverse problem conceptions would lead you to consider very different instructional activities, strategies, and materials.

In concluding this discussion of problem definition, we would like to remind you once more of the importance of lateral thinking. Some people suggest that the definition phase presents the greatest stumbling block to effective problem solving. Because our culture values action and results, our natural inclination is to "jump right in," and begin working on a solution. Problems often are defined by default and, as a result, we may find ourselves trying to solve the wrong problem. By devoting sufficient time and mental energy to exploring alternative problem conceptions, we increase the likelihood that the problem solving paths we choose will lead to reasonable

solutions.

Exploring Alternative Approaches

During this third phase of the problem solving process, your primary task is to determine a tentative solution, to be tried out in phase four. This phase actually includes several components, each with its own set of issues and concerns: generation of alternatives, evaluation and selection of one alternative, elaboration of the selected alternative. Some models treat these components as separate phases of the problem solving process. We treat exploration as a single phase, to emphasize the fact that the three components are dealt with in a cyclical rather than linear fashion. However, we discuss each component separately, to highlight its unique sets of strategies, issues, and concerns.

Generation of alternatives. Once you reach the exploration phase, you already have a fairly detailed conception of the problem. At this point, people are often tempted to quickly determine a likely "best" alternative and begin elaborating it, without considering other possible solutions. In fact, there is a fair amount of evidence suggesting that this is what experienced teachers typically do. Rather than generating several alternatives and selecting among them, experienced teachers often proceed directly to the elaboration component. They generally begin, and end, with ideas that have worked in the past.

Do not skip the stage of generating alternatives! This only increases the likelihood that you will find yourself tied to "tried and true" solutions -- which may not be the best solutions -- and which are likely to shut you off from innovative, novel strategies and activities.

To help you generate alternatives, you might employ one or more of the strategies described within the literature on creativity and creative problem solving. The "cardinal rule" for this stage is "generate, don't evaluate." Your task is to come up with as many possible solutions as you can, without asking whether these solutions are feasible, sensible, or workable. One well-known technique for accomplishing this task is brainstorming, a group process for listing ideas in which the sole criterion for success is the number of ideas which are generated. Brainstorming is ideal if you are able to arrange a common planning time with other teachers. An approach that is frequently easier to implement is to actively seek opinions from a diverse group of other people in your building -- teachers, administrators and (of course) your students.

In addition to active idea-generating strategies such as these, experts on creativity stress the importance of allowing an incubation period in which you stop working on the problem for a while. When a problem is put aside or put in the back of your mind, hopefully ideas will "incubate" and fresh insights will occur to you. Make sure to organize and schedule your planning

-- particularly planning of units and activities for which creativity and innovation are high priorities -- to allow time for ideas to incubate.

Evaluation and selection of an alternative. During the evaluation and selection component, your task is to select an alternative for further elaboration. Undoubtedly, you have already considered several aspects of your classroom situation during earlier phases of problem solving. These aspects should be given systematic attention during the evaluation and selection process. Research on effective teaching as we will see, also offers many suggestions which should be considered during this process. And your own knowledge, experience, and teaching goals will influence the decisions you make. These three sets of factors are briefly discussed here.

Research on teacher planning and problem solving suggests a variety of factors to consider in selecting among alternatives. These factors include student characteristics, the curriculum and resources available for instruction, and the context of instruction. Experienced teachers often report that information about students is the most important factor in determining their selection of instructional strategies and activities. The student characteristic that has the greatest impact on these decisions is ability. To a lesser extent, teachers take into account non-academic characteristics such as class participation and classroom behavior.

Resources available for teaching include programs and materials supplied for teaching particular subjects, guidelines in individual schools or districts, student evaluation forms, resource instructors (for subjects such as art and music), and aides available for helping in the classroom. Teachers report that when selecting alternative instructional paths, they accept the textbook as the major, and often only, source of content. Thus, concerns about subject matter become concerns about the presentation of textbook material. Planning about the presentation of content typically focuses on activities and materials. Here, too, textbooks and associated materials (especially teacher's manuals) play a major role. In fact, in a study of elementary teachers' planning, Gail McCutcheon (1980) found that 85% to 95% of the reading and mathematics activities used by teachers were based on suggestions in teacher's manuals. It is our belief that such extensive reliance on textbooks and teacher's manuals may negatively affect the quality of instruction. But we hope that by engaging in all phases of problem solving (particularly generation and selection of alternatives) with a mind open to innovation and novelty, you will develop solutions to instructional problems that are both reasonable and creative.

The context of instruction includes (among other things) physical characteristics of the classroom and the school, the number of students in the class, length of the school day and class period, and your own relationships with the principal and

other teachers. Some teachers report that in selecting alternative instructional paths they pay particular attention to such aspects of the classroom environment as the sense of community and group cohesiveness. Because of this emphasis, they plan activities that stress small group work, cooperation, and respect for other group members. Other teachers report that extra-classroom pressures in the school system (e.g., administrators, district and school policies) and in the community (e.g., parents) are important considerations. For example, school and district administrative policies about class size, scheduling, grouping, and promotion and retention often place limits on teachers' instructional planning.

Your own knowledge and experience undoubtedly will have influenced your thinking in earlier phases of the problem solving process -- for example, by affecting the way you perceived problem situations and generated alternative solutions. In this evaluation and selection component, your knowledge and experience with similar situations may provide insights about the probable effectiveness of alternatives you are considering.

Your general teaching goals will also influence your evaluation and selection of alternatives. These goals include explicit statements of desired outcomes, as well as vague intuitions or attitudes toward teaching that you may have.

Finally, research on effective teaching can provide valuable information about strategies that typically work to promote student involvement in instructional activities. Once you have

generated a set of possible solutions, this research base can help you determine which of the options have a high probability of producing the outcomes you desire. In the chapters that follow, we summarize findings from this body of research, and we illustrate how these findings can be used to solve problems you are likely to face in your first year of teaching.

The product of this phase is an initial idea that you feel is worthy of further elaboration. This idea will not be precise or specific. To use de Bono's analogy in a slightly different context, you will have selected from your many shallow holes the one which you will dig deeper and bigger during the next component -- elaboration.

Elaboration of the selected alternative. During the elaboration stage, you "flesh out" the selected problem solution, until you reach the point at which it is either ready to be implemented in your classroom or rejected as unworkable. Bob Yinger (1980) has portrayed this problem-solving stage as a design cycle consisting of three components: elaboration, investigation, and adaptation. Elaboration entails the development and embellishment of the tentative solution, using elements or routines in your own teaching repertoire, or ideas gathered from available resources such as instructional materials and your colleagues. Often, if the problem is a complex one, teachers will focus on one component or subproblem at a time. For example, when planning new activities, the teacher in

Yinger's study directed her attention to seven activity features -- location, structure and sequence, duration, participants, acceptable student moves, teacher's instructional moves, and content and materials. For her, these features were the subproblems of planning for instructional activities.

The investigation component of the design cycle provides information about the workability of the solution as well as new information about the planning problem. In this component, you might simply "try out," or mentally visualize the solution in the situation for which it is planned. In this way, you can obtain information about its probable effectiveness. For example, trying out of an instructional activity would involve imagining how that activity would work in your present classroom and teaching situation. This mental exercise would help you to judge the likelihood that the activity would succeed, without actually testing it in the classroom or waiting until planning is complete.

Adaptation is the process which completes the design cycle. This process involves the integration of new ideas developed during elaboration and investigation into the overall problem solution. Using the example of an instructional activity, ideas concerning each feature are incorporated into the general plan for the activity. The design cycle is complete when solutions to all subproblems have been integrated into a tentative problem

solution which is ready to be implemented and evaluated within the actual classroom context.

Acting on a Plan and Looking at the Effects

Your ultimate goal (as a problem solving professional) is the successful implementation of learning activities in classrooms. You cannot really be sure about the adequacy of your solutions (that is, your plans for action) until you act on the basis of them and look carefully to see if they work. These two activities are the last phases of the problem solving process. As discussed earlier, they take place during the interactive and postactive phases of teaching. Typically, activities or other planned classroom events are evaluated both during and after implementation. As Yinger suggests, the result of this evaluation could be that (1) you reject the entire solution, (2) you return to the design cycle for modifications, or (3) you implement the solution on a routine basis. When problem solutions prove to be successful over time and across situations, they are integrated into a teacher's repertoire of knowledge and experience. They then become part of the set of factors that influence future problem solving endeavors.

References
Chapter 2

de Bono, E. (1967). New think. New York: Basic Books.

Bransford, J., & Stein, B. (1984). The IDEAL problem solver: A guide for improving thinking, learning, and creativity. New York: Wilt Freeman & Co.

Einstein, A., & Infeld, L. (1938). The evolution of physics, the growth of ideas from early concepts of relativity and quanta. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Fenstermacher, G. D. (1980). On learning to teach effectively from research on teacher effectiveness. In C. Denham & A. Lieberman (Eds.), Time to learn. U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Education.

Freedman, S., Jackson, J., & Boles, K. (1983). Teaching: An imperilled "progression." In L. S. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), Handbook of teaching and policy. New York: Longman.

Jackson, P. (1968). Life in classrooms. New York: Holt.

McCutcheon, G. (1980). How do elementary school teachers plan? The nature of planning and influences on it. The Elementary School Journal, 81, 4-23.

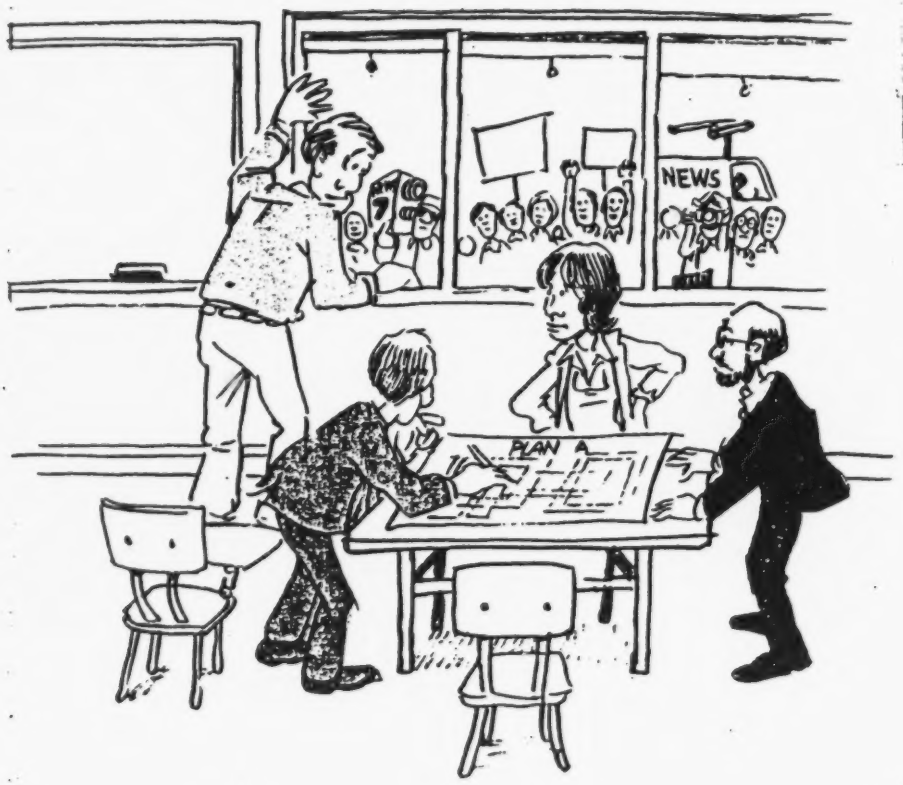
Yinger, R. J. (1980). A study of teacher planning. The Elementary School Journal, 80, 107-127.

Chapter 3

Instruction

Introduction

Teachers and researchers have devoted years to looking for methods of teaching that work. At times, the search has seemed successful enough to give serious consideration to the possibility of an all-inclusive "solution" to teaching. But general solutions, sometimes treated as cure-alls, never seem to last, and the search for a "best" approach continues. There are times also when education seems to suffer from the depressing possibility that nothing really works. Schools and teachers are especially vulnerable to criticism during these times -- in part because of the discovery that a promising new practice did not work, or that schooling in general is not delivering what the public desires. Whenever education comes under fire, there seems to be a renewed effort to look for approaches that make a difference. The scene shown in Figure 3.1 is one which has repeated itself many times in education. Unfortunately, plans constructed under public pressure typically are more useful in relieving these pressures than in finding long term solutions to teaching problems. And crisis planning does not help solve teachers' day to day problem of deciding what to do.



"I think they want to see the plan NOW!"

Figure 3.1 Education under seige.

How should I teach? What should I do? These are legitimate questions for any teacher, and are immediately crucial for beginning teachers. This chapter of the Handbook is designed to deal with your questions about what to do and how to think about the instructional functions of teaching.

It would probably be comforting to you if we could report that a best method of teaching had been found. We cannot deliver such a report, but we do think something is currently happening in education that is potentially even better.

This statement may seem confusing, but one of the things that seems to offer the most hope for an enduring solution to the problem of how to teach is a growing realization among educators that there are no best ways to teach. If you wonder why we are optimistic about this, think about it. Being able to let go of the idea that there exists one or even several best methods is a hopeful sign -- it frees one to recognize that there are many ways to teach. Relaxing our dependency on single best practices also allows us to deal more comfortably with the often disturbing reality that none of the many available (or potentially available) approaches comes with any guarantee at all. To the extent that we continue to believe in the possibility of a single best approach (particularly when that belief leads us to look for "quick fixes," as shown in Figure 3.1), we will be destined to relive crisis situations in education time and again.

Proposition #1: As you begin to think about instruction, try to keep in mind that classroom teaching is much too complex and unpredictable to ever yield to single best practices.

By itself, the above proposition probably makes sense to you but it provides few clues for what to do. However, as we move beyond this initially disturbing proposition, there is cause for some optimism. Over the past 10-15 years, researchers have gained more than just an appreciation for the complexity of teaching -- they have verified also that some teachers are much better at teaching than others. We are now able to describe, in some detail, what effective teachers are doing that less effective teachers are missing. You will see as we move into this chapter that the mystery about what one should do to become more effective as a teacher is slowly being made visible.

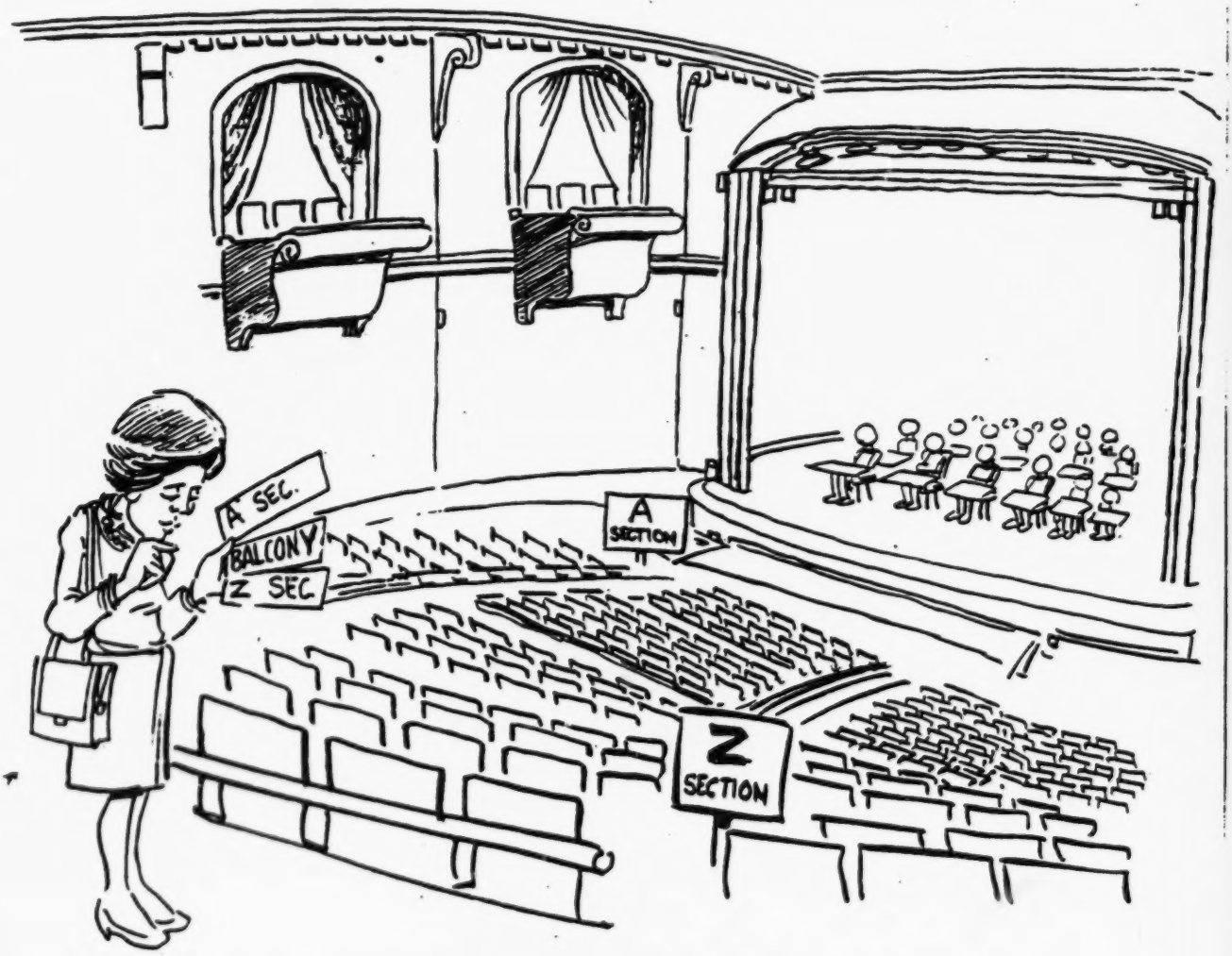
> Proposition #2: Drawing from recent classroom research, it is now possible to demonstrate that individual teachers can make a dramatic difference in how much students learn. Not only are we learning what effective teachers do to make a difference, but there is encouraging evidence that the behaviors of effective teachers can be learned.

Being able to distinguish between the actions of more effective and less effective teachers is comforting in the sense that any teacher can now begin to examine his/her behavior in light of some known characteristics of effectiveness. In fact, there is a growing tendency to evaluate teachers' performance based on what researchers have found out about effective

teaching. The logic is quite simple -- now that we know what it is that more effective teachers do, we should require the same behaviors of all teachers. Unfortunately, this strategy overlooks several crucial difficulties concerning the translation of research findings into practice. Moreover, requiring all teachers to conform to a limited set of behavior violates our first proposition above. As we continue, this point receives further elaboration.

Following this introduction, we will take a look at two or three of the major lines of investigation that are currently having a rather large effect on how educators view teaching. As we look across the collections of studies, you will see two important things. The first is that the study of teaching has become a large and technically competent enterprise. The available database is worth knowing, and should be taken into consideration in your teaching. The other point is more subtle -- it concerns the <u>limitations</u> of the findings. Because the studies were conducted within very limited contexts (e.g., particular grade levels, subject areas, and types of objectives), the findings should be dealt with accordingly. Our concern for the proper utilization of research leads us, in fact, to a third orienting proposition.

Proposition #3: Research findings are currently seen as an important source of information for teachers to utilize in deciding how to teach. Research should not be seen, however, as providing strict rules that teachers must follow to be successful. At best, research can provide a rich set of concepts useful for <u>thinking</u> about how best to teach.



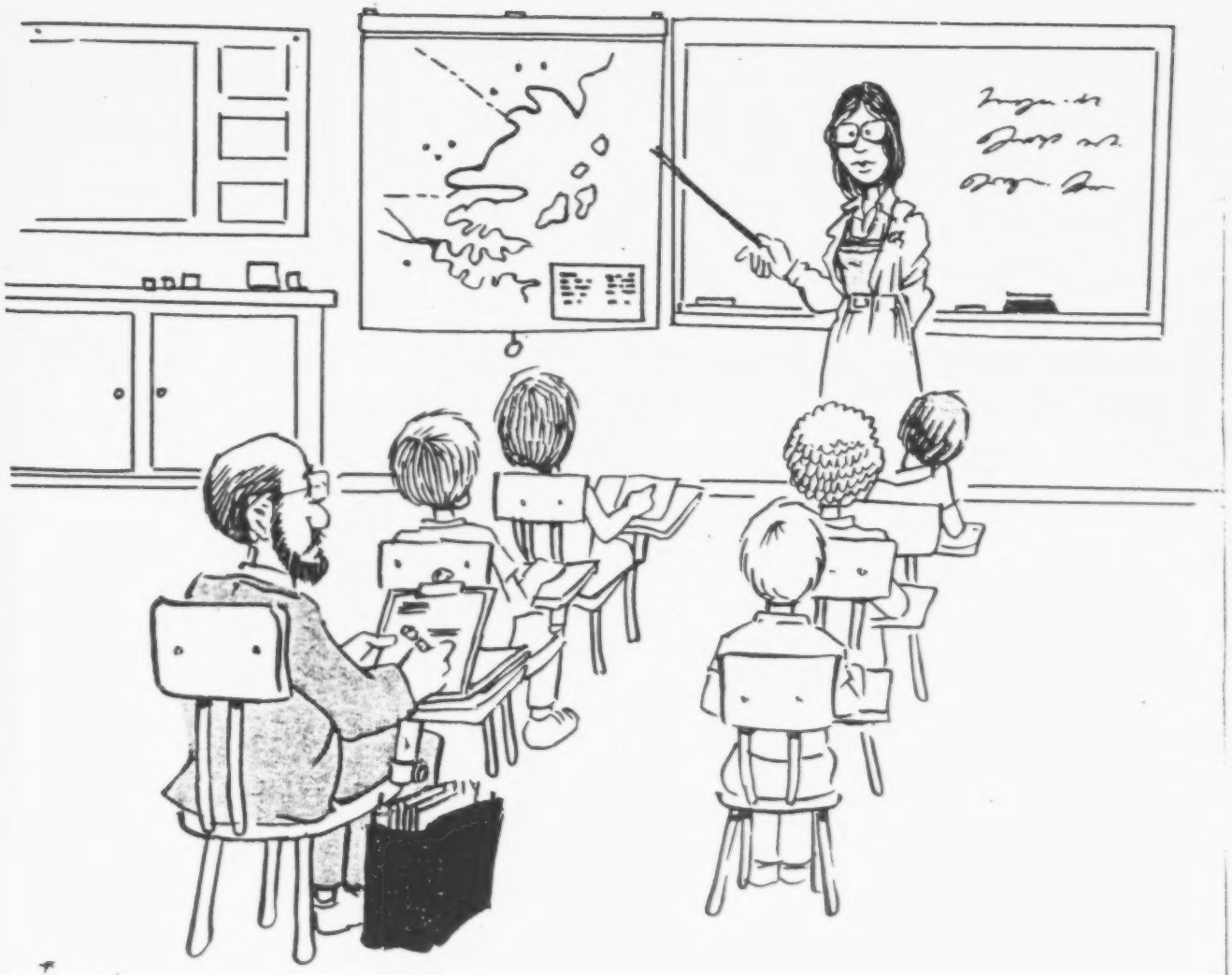
"I'd better see this one three times, to get the full meaning."

Figure 3.2 Good problem solvers are distinguished by their ability to examine a situation from a variety of perspectives.

This final proposition underscores our decision to cast the Handbook within a problem-solving orientation. Our goal is to demonstrate that for a teacher who is determined to learn, there is a rich source of findings, concepts, and models which can be used to better understand the great variability of circumstances that teachers will confront. As shown in Figure 3.2, we advocate looking at teaching situations from a variety of perspectives. As we suggest in Chapter 2, good problem solvers excel not simply because they have some magic way of finding solutions -- they are better able to understand problems by formulating them carefully in terms of knowledge and techniques that can be brought to bear on the situation. The old saying that questions well asked are half answered is a good way to characterize the benefits to be derived from a systematic and informed approach to thinking about one's teaching problems. In the sections which follow, we will explore some of the sources of data which teachers are now beginning to consider in thinking about their own teaching situations.

Variation in Teaching: Descriptive Studies

As we have already pointed out, there has been a tremendous amount of research activity during the past 15 years directed towards a better understanding of teaching. Some of that research has been descriptive in nature. As depicted in Figure 3.3, this research requires that someone collect data on



"And their principle, uh, chief export is..."

Figure 3.3 Classroom observations are a major source of data for analysis of teaching.

classroom phenomena as they occur. Descriptive studies which utilize observational methodologies range in intensity from only a few hours duration to those in which investigators literally spend months in the same classroom. Observational studies have had an important role in opening up classrooms for serious study and have led to subsequent investigations in which attempts are made to link teacher behavior to student outcomes. Through such studies of teaching, we can now better appreciate the complexity of the task teachers face (e.g., handling 1500+ teaching interactions per day in some settings), as well as the fact that a great deal of variety exists within and between classrooms with respect to what teachers actually do. Some of the instructional variables for which dramatic differences among teachers have been observed include utilization of time, monitoring of student performance, providing feedback, and structuring material.

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES). One of the richest available sources of information about what teachers do comes from the BTES (see Charles Fisher, David Berliner and colleagues, 1980) As shown in our brief FOCUS on BTES, it was possible for researchers to isolate aspects of teaching behavior for which there was considerable variation across teachers. After hundreds of hours spent in dozens of classrooms, a pattern of results began to emerge in which better, more successful

The Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study

BTES

Spanning almost an entire decade (1970-1980) from initial planning through dissemination of findings, the BTES has had a major effect on how educators think about some important aspects of teaching. Although the title of this research program suggests an intent to study beginning teachers, the emphasis was predominantly on the behavior of experienced teachers.

The BTES research program was conducted in three major phases, all involving intensive observation of teachers teaching within elementary classrooms (second and fifth grades).

Phases	Key Findings
II. Data collected from almost 100 second and fifth grade classrooms.	<u>Better</u> teachers • were well organized • maximized time spent actually teaching • took an active approach to teaching.
IIIa. Ethnographic study involving generation of detailed descriptions of teaching within 50 classrooms.	<u>Better</u> teachers • called on students by name • listened to students, accepted their feelings, involved them in decision making • did <u>not</u> ignore, shame, or harass students • Monitored more, demanded more, followed through more • utilized time more efficiently • knew their subject matter.
IIIb. Field study conducted within approximately 40 classrooms each containing several target students from low SES and achievment ranges.	<u>Better</u> teachers • allocated more class time to actual instruction • utilized brisk instructional pace, gradual movement through small steps, high success rates, strong academic focus. <u>Better</u> instruction maximized • allocated time • student engaged time • student success rates.

teachers could be distinguished from their less successful colleagues. We have summarized some of the key features of BETTER teaching in the FOCUS on BTES.

Among the most highly publicized and potentially useful concepts to grow out of the BTES data was the notion of Academic Learning Time. In particular, Phase IIIb of BTES showed the ease with which large chunks of classroom time can be lost, due to poor management and use of inappropriate instructional tasks. We have illustrated this major BTES finding in a graphic display (see Figure 3.4) which shows how classroom time is utilized in

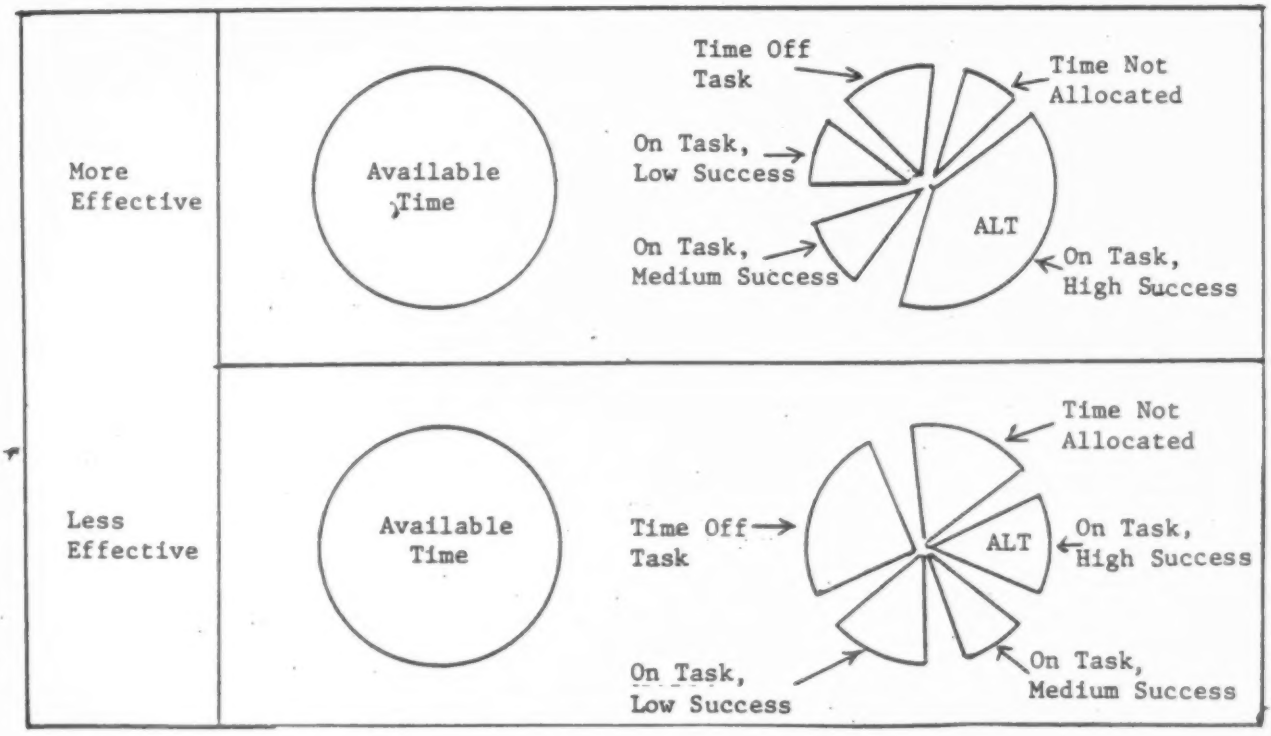


Figure 3.4 Utilization of time by more and less effective teachers (Adapted from BTES findings).

very different ways in classrooms of more and less effective teachers. A major conclusion we can draw from these findings is that use of time is a crucial variable for consideration in instructional planning.

The study of teacher expectations. Here we FOCUS on a line of research which illustrates another dimension of variability in teacher behavior. As we have shown, there is a very definite set of "links" between the expectations which teachers have for student achievement and the eventual level of achievement attained. The results of studies done within the context of the "teacher expectation" model point to some very clear differences in the way teachers behave toward students seen as high achievers versus those seen as low achievers (we have shown an abbreviated list). One of the basic instructional decisions teachers must make concerns how much to expect of students. Assignments and classroom presentations can be made too easy or too difficult -- both represent teaching errors. In general, higher expectations seem to be related to higher achievement, but for a variety of possible reasons (some well intended), low achievers often receive instructional treatments that are too easy, too highly structured, and generally less powerful than the treatments received by high achievers within the same classroom. It is useful to keep in mind that in schools and classrooms where

TEACHER EXPECTATION STUDIES

The effects of teacher expectations on student performance has been a topic of special interest to researchers beginning in the late 60's and continuing until the present time. The importance of what teachers do when they interact with students is shown in the following set of relationships proposed by Brophy and Good (1970).

- Teacher has particular achievement expectations for particular students
- Teacher behaves toward students in accordance with expectations
- Students "pick-up" teacher's expectations which affects their self-concepts and levels of aspirations
- Over time teacher expectations begin to "shape" student achievement
- Eventually, student achievement conforms to teacher expectations

One of the most interesting sets of findings from this research concerns the wide variability of teacher behavior toward low achieving students. Some of the ways in which low achievers and high achievers are distinguished are shown below. These differences have been found comparing one teacher to another as well as comparing the same teacher's behavior toward different students in the same class.

- Low achievers located greater distance from teacher -- also lows placed in same group
- Lows receive less academic attention
- Lows called on less --given less time to answer questions
- Lows criticized more, praised less
- Feedback for lows less frequent, less detailed, less accurate
- Less demand on lows for work and effort
- Lows interrupted more

teachers have been sensitized to possible expectancy effects, achievement among low performers has sometimes increased markedly.

Variation in Teaching: Toward Control and Experimentation

What works in teaching? To begin to answer this question the researcher organizes the observations of classrooms and teachers so that it is possible (as we have just seen) to examine correlations between particular teacher behaviors and student achievement. In these studies, the researcher has been interested primarily in discrete teaching behaviors (such as asking questions, providing feedback, organizing content, and conducting reviews). During recent years, this type of research has grown rapidly to the point where it is possible now to list a large number of teacher behaviors that have known relationships (positive or negative) to student achievement. Of course, knowing that particular teacher behaviors are associated with desired student outcomes does not mean that the behaviors necessarily caused the student achievement. For this reason, it is desirable for researchers to take the next step, and arrange for controlled experimental tests of practices used by more effective teachers.

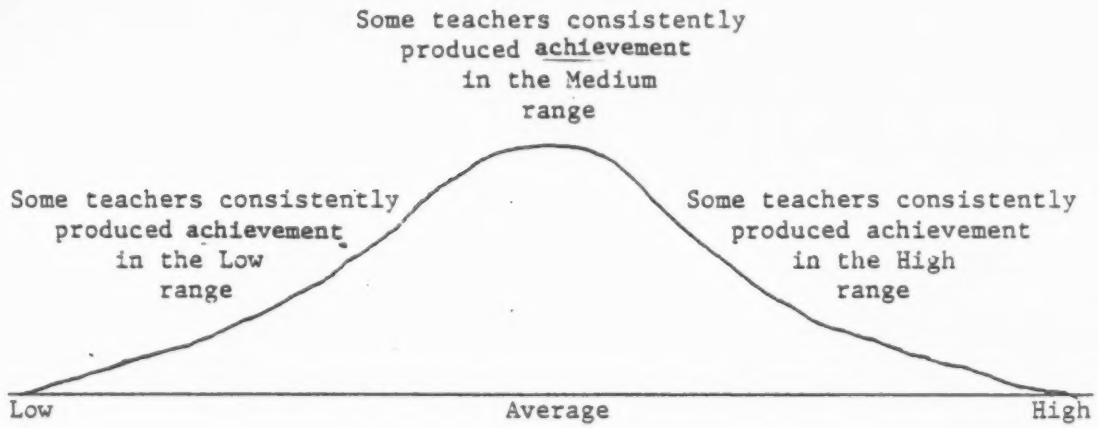
The Missouri Mathematics Effectiveness Studies. An excellent example of the progression of research from description to experimentation is the work done by Tom Good and Douglas

Grouws (1983) under a program called the Missouri Mathematics Effectiveness Project. As shown in our FOCUS statement, Good and Grouws began their work with the observation that over a 3-year period some teachers were able to produce consistently high achievement gains in their classes, while other teachers produced consistently low achievement gains. These findings illustrate a familiar theme in the research on teaching literature -- teachers do make a difference.

To determine exactly what the High achievement teachers were doing compared to the Lows, a second phase of the research was conducted -- both Highs and Lows were observed several times. As we have indicated in summary form (see Phase II), the most effective teachers (The Highs) demonstrated a pattern of behavior which the authors were fairly certain caused the superior mathematics achievement. As with all correlational findings, however, it is entirely possible that factors other than those studied could be operating as causal agents. Therefore, the authors decided that a controlled test should be done in which mathematics teachers would be randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions (see our description labeled Phase III). Training for the experimental (treatment) teachers consisted of two 90-minute sessions which covered teaching strategies and techniques derived from the observational study (as well as from

The Missouri Mathematics Effectiveness Study

Phase I


Some teachers consistently produced achievement in the Medium range
Some teachers consistently produced achievement in the Low range
Some teachers consistently produced achievement in the High range
Low
Average
High

Results of a three year review of standardized Math Achievement in 100 Third and Fourth Grade classrooms

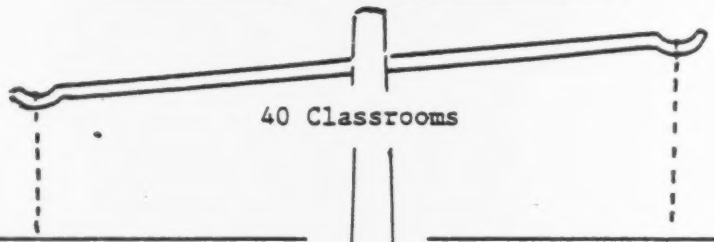
Phase II

Findings: Compared to Lows, the High achievement group teachers were doing the following things.

- Using more active teaching strategies during the development of lessons.
- Spending more of class time actually working on mathematics.
- Encouraging students to initiate more academically oriented questions.
- Maintaining a more relaxed and non-evaluative learning atmosphere.
- Demonstrating higher achievement expectations.

Phase III

Experimental Test of techniques utilized by effective teachers



In 21 experimental classrooms teachers were trained to utilize the techniques found in consistently effective teachers

In control classrooms teachers used whatever methods they would normally employ

Experimental teachers given 45-page manual explaining a model of effective mathematics teaching and 2½ hours instruction

Controls simply encouraged to maximize achievement gains in students

Less achievement using "regular" techniques

Greater Math achievement for children taught using experimental methods

other classroom research). The preparation of a training program for this study resulted in the creation of a system of instruction which Good and Grouws refer to as "active teaching." This system is discussed in more detail later in our FOCUS on Active Teaching.

Control teachers were given no training, but the researchers did meet with the control group to encourage them to do their best using whatever techniques they would normally employ. As we have indicated, the achievement gains of the children who were taught using the system of "active teaching" clearly outweighed the achievement of children taught by control teachers using normal techniques.

This particular study is important to practitioners for several reasons. First, the study demonstrates not only that some teachers are more effective than others, but also that the techniques of good teachers <u>can be acquired</u> through training. Second, the training in this study was quite modest (two 90-minute sessions), and therefore within the capability of most school systems. Finally, the question of how the experimental methods influenced student attitudes was addressed, and the results showed a discernible positive effect on student attitudes towards mathematics. Shortly, we will explore in a little more detail exactly what the training attempted to do and why it was

so effective. But before doing that it is important to recognize that a number of similar experimental studies have been conducted across different age levels and content areas.

Other experimental evidence. The Missouri Mathematics Project is a prominent example among several experimental studies of classroom teaching. Barak Rosenshine (1983) has reported on a collection of such studies in a special issue of the Elementary School Journal. What he attempted to do in his review was distill the essential functions of effective teaching. The research findings themselves can be summarized in terms of two major generalizations.

> Generalization 1. For some content areas, students who are taught by tightly structured curricula perform better (achievement wise) than do students taught by methods stressing individualization and/or discovery.

> Generalization 2. Students who get their instruction directly from the teacher achieve more than students who are expected to get it themselves, or from each other.

The result of Rosenshine's synthesis of this research is a model of teaching which is often referred to as "direct instruction" (see our FOCUS statement). A quick examination of the model shows that the six major teaching functions are indeed consistent

Direct Instruction

The Essential Teaching Functions

Numerous studies have demonstrated experimentally the beneficial effects of a tightly structured curriculum. The instructional model shown here represents one attempt (Rosenshine, 1983) to account for a wide variety of research findings which collectively have been tested successfully in a variety of settings.

INSTRUCTIONAL FUNCTIONS	CRITICAL TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND UNDERSTANDINGS
1. Daily review, checking previous day's work, and reteaching (if necessary)	• Take time to check for understanding of previous day's work. • Go over required homework. • Reteach areas where students made mistakes.
2. Presenting new content/ skills	• Organize material into series of small steps. Recognize that progress must depend on mastering of each step. • Cover one point at a time, avoiding digressions. • Model the skill if appropriate; use many varied examples. • Give detailed explanations, be prepared to go over difficult material more than once. • Check student understanding by asking questions. • Do not give up until students understand material.
3. Initial student practice	• Maximize time spent guiding student practice by asking frequent questions, correcting mistakes, repeating instructional steps, leading initial work on assigned problems. • Pay particular attention to <u>frequency</u> of questions/answers and to student success. Recall from BTES study the critical role of success rates (85-90% correct) in maximizing academic learning time (ALT). • Be prepared with a large number of questions around the main points and/or processes being discussed. • Use techniques which ensure maximum participation by all students. • Continue practice until all students are firm in the understanding of material.

INSTRUCTIONAL FUNCTIONS	CRITICAL TEACHING ACTIVITIES AND UNDERSTANDINGS
4. Feedback and correctives (and recycling of instruction, if necessary)	• Tailor feedback to student according to their needs: Quick, correct response - keep questions moving at brisk pace Hesitant, correct response - reinforce answer, provide brief explanation of process if necessary Careless, Incorrect - correct student, go over quickly Lack of knowledge - provide hints, prompts to quickly correct mistake or re-explain the material • Ensure that errors do not go undetected; provide feedback as quickly as possible.
5. Independent practice so that students are firm and automatic	• Ensure that students are ready for independent work by spending more time in initial teaching and guided practice with the material. • Circulate among students during independent work to ensure high success rates and corrective feedback if necessary. • Alternate instruction and periods of independent work for particularly difficult material.
6. Weekly and monthly reviews	• Periodically check for understanding; provide reteaching if necessary.

with the two generalizations shown here. One can see also that none of the activities reflected in the model are unusual or particularly complex. The model reflects activities that any teacher could implement. Yet the supporting studies show that many teachers do not utilize these fundamental practices. It is important to note that Rosenshine is not advocating that teachers simply "copy" the behaviors derived from the various studies. What he is saying is that the functions listed must somehow be satisfied.

Toward a Basic Teaching Repertoire. Taken together, Rosenshine's "Direct Instruction" model, and Good and Grouws "Active Teaching" system, form the beginnings of a sound teaching repertoire. Both models are based on solid programs of classroom research, and both feature techniques derived directly from the activities of teachers who are known to be effective. In each case the models emphasize the effective use of classroom time to promote student learning. In both models, teachers are clearly in charge, and in fact spend a great deal of the available time actually teaching.

In terms of differences, Good (1983) argues that Active Teaching represents a somewhat broader concept than Direct Instruction. As shown in our summary of the Direct Instruction model, the approach one should take to develop and carry out an instructional episode is indeed specified in considerable detail.

ACTIVE TEACHING

A System of Instruction

DAILY REVIEW (FIRST 8 MINUTES EXCEPT MONDAYS)

a. Review the concepts and skills associated with the homework.
b. Collect and deal with homework assignments.
c. Ask several mental computation exercises.

DEVELOPMENT (ABOUT 15 MINUTES)

a. Briefly focus on prerequisite skills and concepts.
b. Focus on meaning and promoting student understanding by using lively explanations, demonstrations, process explanations, illustrations, etc.
c. Assess student comprehension.
    1. Use process/product questions (active interaction).
    2. Use controlled practice.
d. Repeat and elaborate on the meaning portion as necessary.

SEATWORK (ABOUT 15 MINUTES)

a. Provide uninterrupted successful practice.
b. Maintain momentum — keep the ball rolling. Get everyone involved, then sustain involvement.
c. Use alerting-- let students know their work will be checked at the end of the period.
d. Provide accountability — check the students' work.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

a. Assign homework on a regular basis at the end of each math class except Fridays.
b. Homework should involve about 15 minutes of work to be done at home.
c. Homework should include one or two review problems.

SPECIAL REVIEWS

a. Weekly Review/Maintenance
    1. Conduct during the first 30 minutes each Monday.
    2. Focus on skills and concepts covered during the previous week.
b. Monthly Review/Maintenance
    1. Conduct every fourth Monday.
    2. Focus on skills and concepts covered since the last monthly review.

Direct instruction is very consistent with a "behaviorist" approach to learning -- the goal is to "program" student learning through a series of small steps until a desired terminal objective is reached. By contrast, the concept of Active Teaching allows a more flexible approach in which any of a variety of methods (deductive or inductive) might be utilized, especially during the development phase of the lesson -- that phase in which new content is presented and students are struggling to make sense of the material. Later, we will introduce you to other models of instruction which will help you see that there are indeed many teaching techniques useful for helping students learn and understand.

Our goal at this point is not to suggest that you begin to make decisions about the relative merits of these two models. Clearly they are both useful as tools to guide your thinking. But knowing what the latest research has to say about instruction is only part of the puzzle. The other part involves knowing something about the limitations and potential dangers of using research findings. In the next section, we hope to open your eyes to a variety of problems and "traps" which one encounters in the translation of research into practice. Our intention is not to bias you against the use of research. To the contrary, we hope to make you a more effective consumer, and at the same time a better problem solver.

Teaching Guidelines for the Research Consumer

We began this chapter by pointing out that the search for best ways of teaching frequently ends in frustration. The failure of one "solution," followed by the meteoric rise of another, is commonplace. How to teach reading, math, writing -- how to organize classrooms for instruction -- whether to have walls or open spaces -- all are areas where trends have come and gone. As beginning teachers, you will have seen a few examples of such trends during your careers as students. More experienced professionals and older citizens will likely recall a veritable parade of techniques that periodically invaded teaching but soon faded into obscurity.

Given this history of change, you could hardly be blamed for looking at today's hot topics and trends with skepticism. What will happen to concepts like "direct instruction," "academic learning time," and "active teaching?" The answer to this question, to a large extent, depends on you. Ultimately, you will decide what works and what doesn't work.

Unfortunately, history also shows that your "tests" of new ideas will be so constrained that the underlying concepts will have only the slightest chance of proving themselves. Why? Take another look at Figure 3.1 (Education Under Siege) presented earlier in this chapter. We intended some humor here, but the

depiction is not far removed from the reality of how new approaches to education are sometimes put into operation. What you see is a natural response to intense pressure. Under pressure, "good ideas" are readily accepted and forced into practice with very little critical analysis and even less input from the intended users -- classroom teachers like yourselves. The current popularity of the "Madeline Hunter Approach," for example, shows the great eagerness with which solutions to teaching are sought. However, deciding whether such solutions are good for education in the long run is a task of considerable uncertainty. In the pages which follow, we will attempt to illustrate some of the major flaws of logic and judgement in the utilization of research findings -- flaws which often lead to eventual disenchantment with educational research and research derived practices.

Functionally equivalent paths. When we suggested earlier that there are no best ways to teach, we meant it quite literally. But teachers, and those who evaluate and shape the behavior of teachers, often fail to see options not specifically contained in the presentations of a research finding or teaching model. Most of the basic functions of teaching described by Rosenshine can be satisfied in a variety of ways, regardless of how they might be initially packaged. What is important is whether students learn and build understandings, not whether the teacher has followed a particular route. Figure 3.5 shows a

"Now wait a minute, buddy. I think you took the high road last time."

Figure 3.5 Functionally equivalent paths.

situation in which teachers do recognize that choices exist. Consider for a moment some of the research findings discussed earlier in this chapter. Is it always necessary to begin a class with a review and conclude with independent seatwork? Should assigned work always allow high success rates? Should homework be given each night? Strict adherence to a particular model of teaching (e.g., direct instruction or active teaching) would suggest an affirmative answer to these questions. However, as both Tom Good (proponent of Active Teaching) and Barak Rosenshine (proponent of Direct Instruction) have pointed out, each teacher works within a unique context which must be taken into

consideration. For any teaching situation, there usually exists a variety of possible "moves." Later in this chapter, you will be introduced briefly to other models which illustrate some of the choices available to teachers.

Simpleminded extrapolations. Potentially, one of the worst errors to be made in the utilization of knowledge about teaching is what one could call "simpleminded extrapolation." Most of us are familiar with the concept. Consider the headache for which you take the prescribed two aspirin. How many of us have entertained the following reasoning -- "If two is good, then maybe three or four would be better..."? That kind of thinking is also very apparent in the way attractive research findings are implemented in classrooms. Figure 3.6, for example, shows a very common but misguided extrapolation of the finding that successful

"We know from research that 15 minutes of homework is being required in the most successful math programs. By requiring one hour of homework, we're going to quadruple the results of those programs!"

Figure 3.6 Simpleminded extrapolations

"Believe me, honey, you <u>can</u> overdo the praise."

Figure 3.7

teachers require homework. In this example one finds very little sensitivity to the proper function of homework, nor does there seem to be much concern over the potential danger of extending a treatment beyond a suggested dosage level.

Another example is given in Figure 3.7, which shows an inexperienced teacher receiving some useful advice about her tendency to overuse praise -- one of the more heavily advertised (but often misunderstood) teaching tools. In this case, "praise" was prominently displayed on the evaluation form, and the novice teacher, being eager to please, could quite easily have overextended the treatment. This principal, once she breaks the news that the novice was overly enthusiastic, will probably go on

to suggest that excessive praise can actually damage students' acquisition of work/study habits that are independent and self reinforcing.

Simpleminded extrapolations are sometimes pursued on a much broader scale -- and the charge is led not by novices, but by those who should know better. Earlier, we suggested that one of the major contributions of the BTES study was a much better understanding of the use of time in schools. Any teacher, using the concept of academic learning time, could easily make some useful judgments about the potential effectiveness of his or her own instruction. In some states, though, legislatures have proposed extending the school day -- the idea being that a general across-the-board increase in time would enhance school learning. But given the complexities of the BTES data base, no such extrapolation of the research is warranted. Generally ignored in such proposals are considerations such as what the extra time would be used for, whether ceiling effects exist (i.e., time utilized beyond a certain level yields no further benefits), and how much the promotion of academic learning means (in light of other goals of schooling such as social adjustment).

Curvilinear relationships. One reason research findings are so often extended beyond proposed application levels is that most people do not intuitively understand that the actual relationship between human performance and a great variety of variables is

curvilinear. A curvilinear relationship is shown in Figure 3.8, where praise is used again as the example. Under conditions of little or no praise, one can reasonably expect that a student's classroom performance will suffer. As the use of praise increases, so does performance. But the relationship is not linear -- performance does not continue to improve with higher and higher levels of the treatment. Ultimately, under too much praise, performance will deteriorate, producing the curvilinear relationship we have illustrated.

An even better example is the relationship between performance and anxiety. Let us use test taking as an example. As we all know, it pays to have at least a minimal level of anxiety or tension in order to perform adequately. As tension increases, so does performance -- but only to a point. Most of

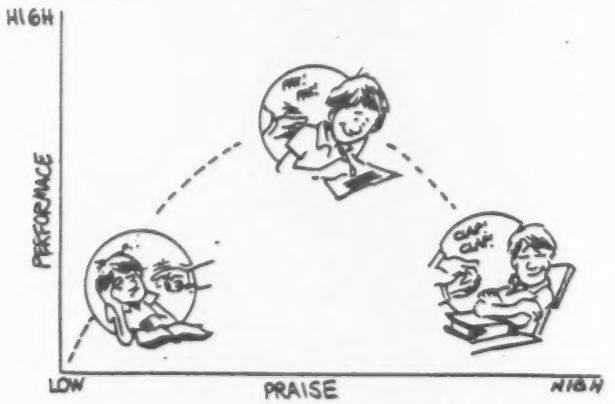


Figure 3.8 The relationship between praise and performance is non-linear.

us have had the experience of being so anxious about a test that we actually performed much more poorly than our capabilities and preparation would have suggested. It is useful to keep these examples in mind because they enhance our sensitivity to the potential for misapplication of knowledge about teaching.

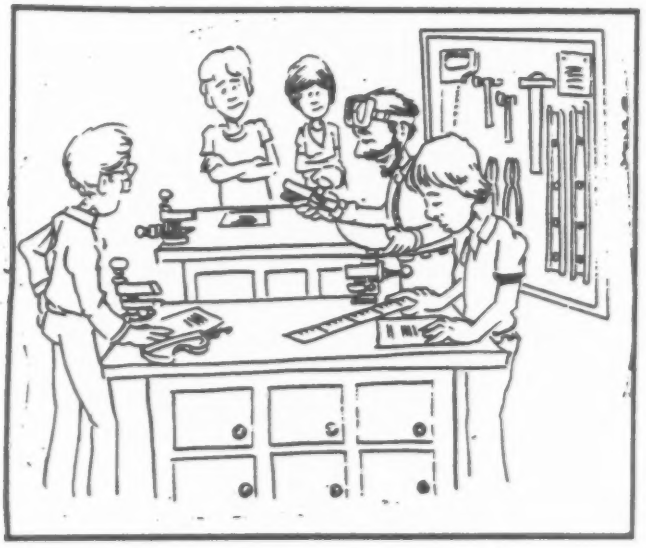
Qualifications of findings. Another important caveat to keep in mind is this: Knowledge about teaching has been generated from research conducted in particular settings and age groups, and with particular academic goals. Consequently, the findings may apply only to those settings (or very similar circumstances). The situation depicted in Figure 3.9, for example, is not an unexpected consequence of blind adherence to a

"Here it comes: what we did yesterday, what we're gonna do today, today's lesson, what we did today..."

Figure 3.9

particular teaching routine. A particular teaching model might suggest a daily review, but obviously not all students require the same treatment.

Perhaps even more damaging is the case where schools adopt (as a matter of policy) techniques that advance certain goals at the expense of others (see Figure 3.10). Much of the research that pertains to teaching, regardless of whether it was done in classrooms or laboratories, has focused on the attainment of basic academic skills. Advanced levels of analysis, problem solving, and autonomous thinking are not necessarily advanced



"I know you were all looking forward to creating your own projects this year. However, in keeping with the school's new DIRECT INSTRUCTION policy..."

Figure 3.10

through the use of techniques derived from such research. For example, the approach to teaching which we have referred to as "direct instruction" has a great deal of appeal in some settings (see Figure 3.11), but takes on a less flattering image in others (again, refer to Figure 3.10). Individual teachers (as well as schools) who want to put their instructional programs on a research basis should exercise appropriate restraint to ensure that they are not allowing the selection of research-supported methods and techniques to dictate goals.

Figure 3.11 Direct Instruction has been proven to be an effective teaching model in some contexts and some settings.

Teacher behavior mediated by student behavior. A further complexity involves the role of the student. This consideration is almost totally overlooked by any mechanistically applied model of teacher behavior. Students think, feel, process information, and generally add a great deal of uncertainty to anyone's attempt to describe teaching in any complete sense.

Consider the scene shown in Figure 3.12. This math teacher may have followed all the advice possible from the research we have described thus far, but the bottom line is that he must make

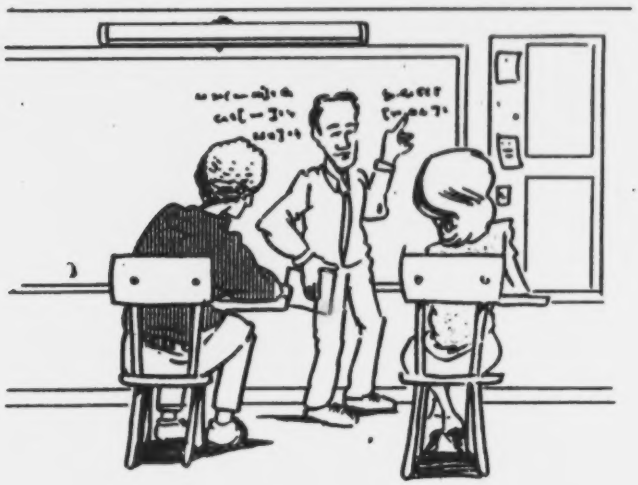
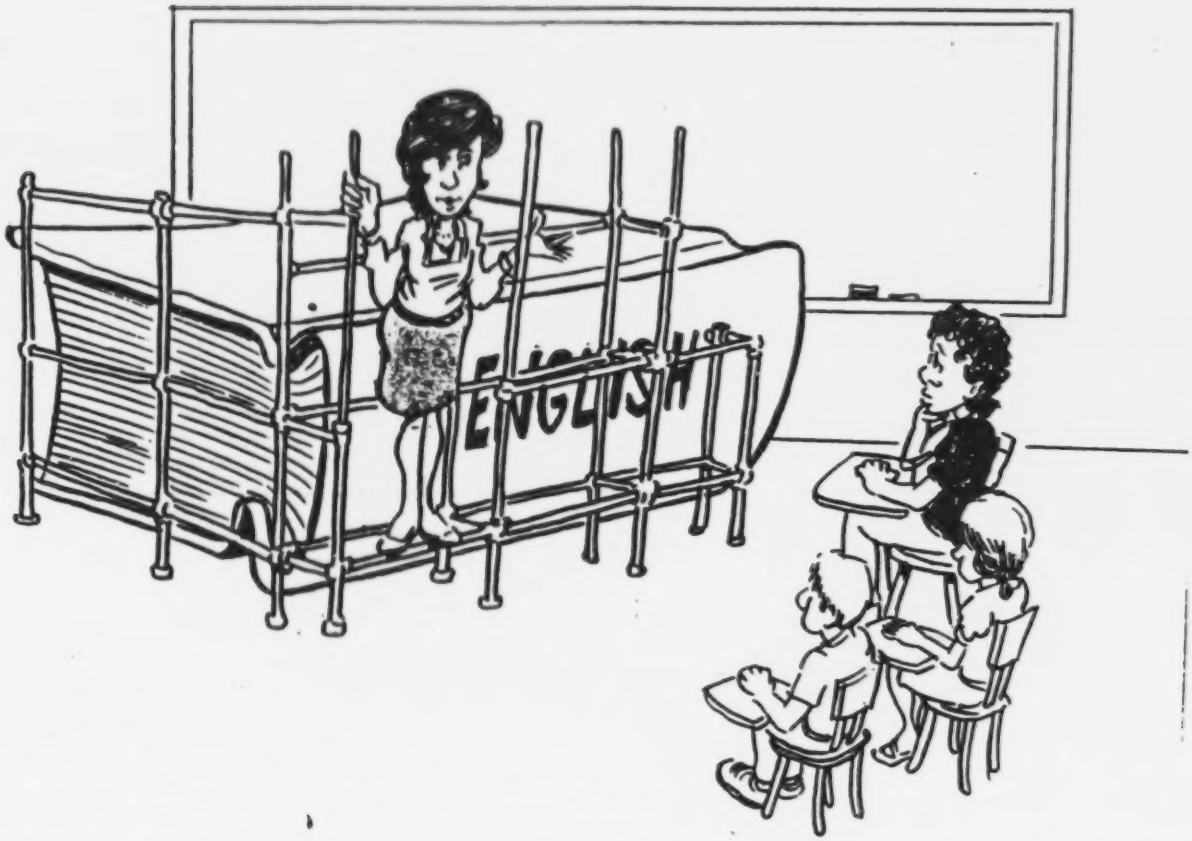


Figure 3.12 Can the new information be assimilated into an existing body of knowledge? This math teacher knows that the concept being presented must be relatable to something these students already know.

a connection between the student's available store of information and the material at hand. A frequently encountered situation is when the "gap" between the known and the unknown is bridged for some students but not for others. Helping students make such connections requires more than the adoption of a few research-based techniques. The teacher in Figure 3.13, for example, knows that the construction of knowledge in students' minds is often much like building a complex scaffolding. In order for information to be retained it must be organized into a coherent framework. A successful teacher should help the students to construct such a framework prior to presenting facts and details. This could make a great deal of difference in terms of understanding, and subsequent recall.

You will recall that at several points in the Handbook we have commented on the substantial progress recently made in the research on classroom teaching. We must also point out that much progress has also been made in terms of understanding human learning processes. In today's world it is essential that teachers combine their knowledge of the research on teaching with a basic understanding of the psychological evidence concerning information processing activities and capabilities of children and adults. As a final example in this vein, the elementary

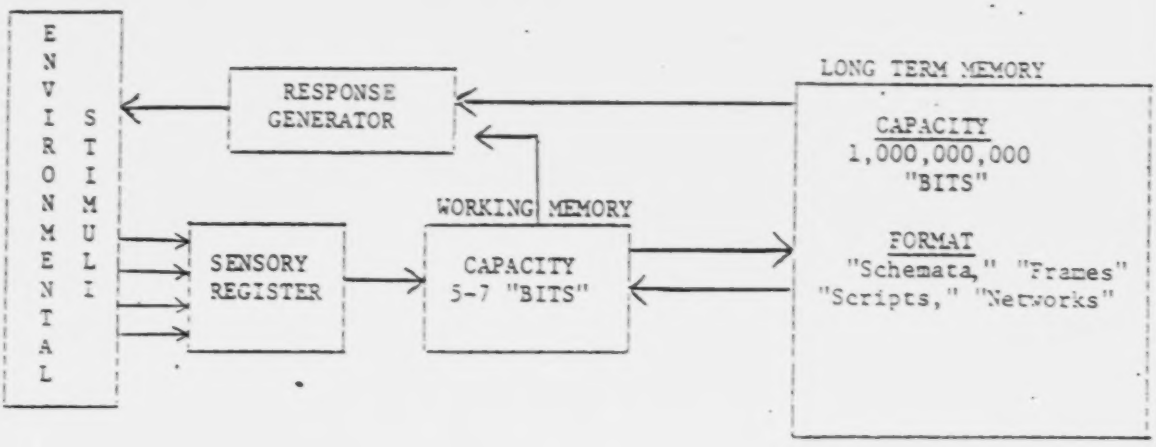


"Today, class, we shall begin with the foundations of the English language."

Figure 3.13 Building a "scaffolding" for the new material to be learned. This teacher knows that students can become disoriented and eventually discouraged if they do not understand how to organize the material being presented.

teacher shown in Figure 3.14 is helping children develop their own "elaborations" of a story. She knows that the probability of students understanding and remembering the material depends on the number of associations that they can make between their own experience and the various elements of the story. Consequently, she is encouraging students to "activate" what they already know, and to use this prior knowledge to better understand and interpret the story. She may be following a prescribed sequence

Figure 3.14 This teacher is taking the time to allow students to "elaborate" on the assigned story. She knows that understanding and recall will be enhanced if the children can "activate" aspects of their own memories which are relatable to the story.



Does the model you see here seem familiar? It should -- the model represents what has been essentially a revolution in social science during the past 25 years. During this time basic psychological theory has redirected itself away from the persistent "stimulus-response-consequence" models of learning toward what happens in the brain as humans process information. Concepts such as working memory, long-term memory, encoding, retrieval, capacity, filters, decay, interference, evaluation, etc. have become part of the everyday working language in most of the social science disciplines including education.

Cognitive Psychology provides a rich source of ideas and guiding principles for teachers and curriculum developers. The following set of guidelines represents only some of the ways in which cognitive science is proving useful to educators (adapted from Calfee, 1981):

- Any complicated information structure must be divided into a relatively small number of "chunks" in order to be understood. This principle fits with the limited capacity of working memory.

- The chunks which make up a larger structure must be coherent and self supporting in order that they make sense. Human memory depends on organization -- arbitrary divisions of content will tend to hinder the growth of understanding.

- New structures are best learned by beginning with concrete examples followed by conscious attention to the principles involved.

- The attainment of expertise in any area requires time. The study of information processing has reinforced the notion that learning is very much a developmental activity.

- Storage and retrieval of information depends on discovering or creating a guiding framework...often referred to as frames, schemata, or networks. Frameworks useful for coding information into memory also provide good cues for getting it out at your demand.

of teaching behaviors, but she also will ensure that the sequence takes into account the information processing needs of the children.

If space permitted, many more details and examples could be given to illustrate important connections between the psychological research on cognition and teaching. Instead we will simply leave you with a FOCUS statement which summarizes very briefly some of the major issues and benefits of this research.

Protection for users. We have attempted to illustrate some of the pitfalls and complexities inherent in the utilization of research about teaching. As the research enterprise broadens, and as teachers are increasingly urged to incorporate new knowledge into their teaching, we will need to use a more systematic approach to the utilization of research. Teachers should begin by recognizing the limitations and complications which can arise in the use of research products. The situation teachers currently face is not unlike that of physicians. Just as physicians (and citizen users) are kept informed of the proper use of drugs (see Figure 3.15), so could teachers and other consumers be better informed about the proper use of research findings. Researchers normally do express their findings in terms of cautions and limitations (just as do drug manufacturers), but that part of the message rarely gets

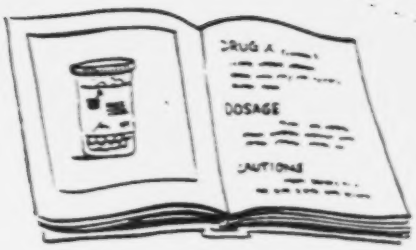


Figure 3.15 Reference guides explaining the proper use of drugs are an indispensable tool for physicians and other medical personnel. Perhaps a similar tool is needed for users of educational research findings.

transmitted, especially when the educational enterprise is looking for a quick shot in the arm. As a result, overdoses and negative "reactions" to inappropriately applied treatments sometimes seem to be the unfortunate rule in education.

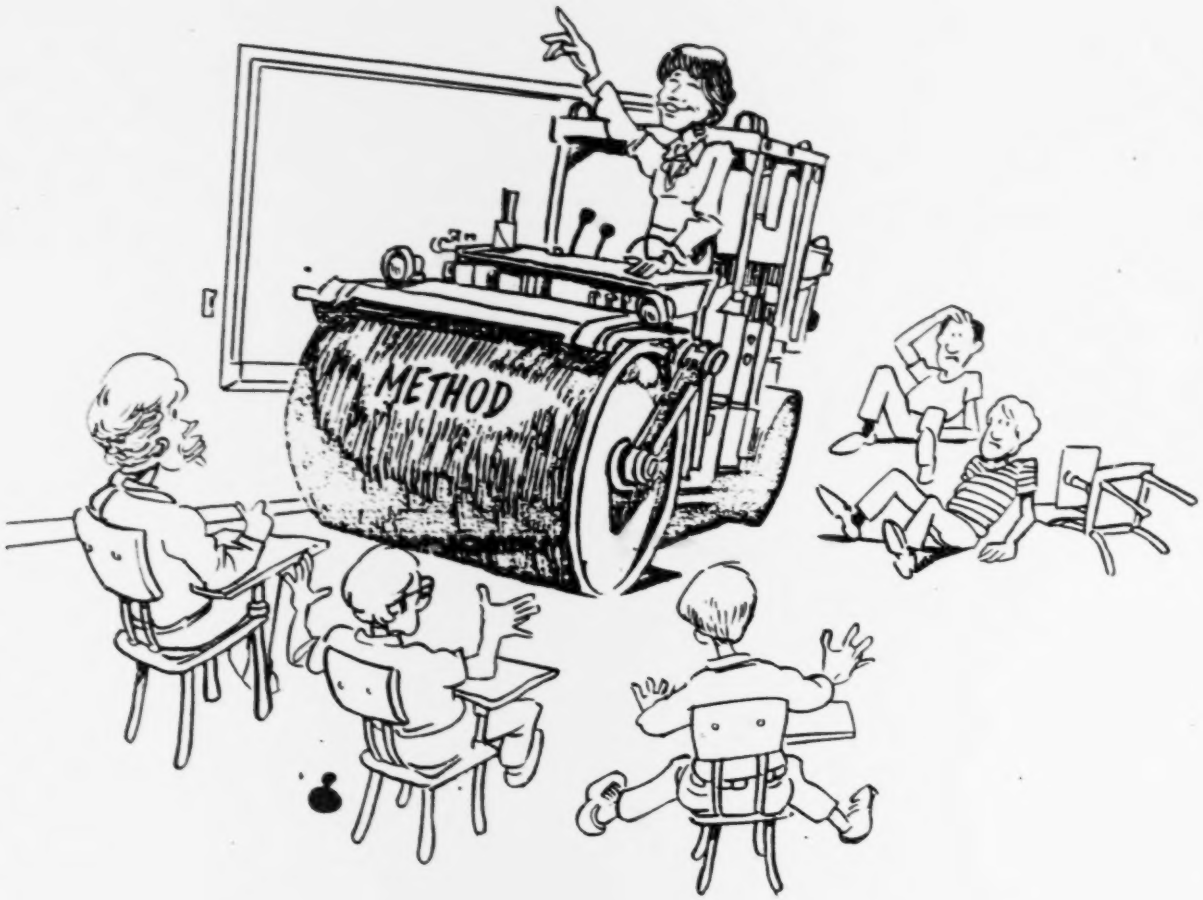
Building a Repertoire

Teachers who think carefully about their teaching -- especially those who utilize good problem solving techniques -- can avoid many of the difficulties described above. Of course, if one is operating with an extremely limited repertoire, it is difficult to really make use of the considerations we have described. Considering functionally equivalent paths, avoiding

simpleminded extrapolations, and gearing instruction to a variety of factors unique to your own situation will be possible only if teachers possess a variety of approaches from which to choose.

Unfortunately, evidence from studies of schooling suggests that even experienced teachers tend to operate on the basis of a very limited repertoire. The picture that emerges is one in which "methods" are used much like steamrollers (see Figure 3.16). Once a teacher has adapted to a particular approach, the approach tends to be utilized with little sensitivity to the effect it has on students, either intellectually ... emotionally (or to its appropriateness for specific goals). The "driver" shown in Figure 3.16 could be behaving in perfect harmony with the latest research on effective teaching (e.g., use of direct instruction), and still be totally missing the needs of her students or the goals she is attempting to achieve.

Because of the above observations, we have suggested earlier in the Handbook that one of your main "jobs" as a beginning teacher is to work on expanding your repertoire of teaching techniques and strategies. Admittedly, this may not seem like a very practical idea during the initial adjustment phase, when survival is clearly your foremost goal. Very soon, however, you will begin to realize that you have a tendency to stretch a given technique or teaching strategy far beyond its intended purpose. The variety of goals you want to achieve, combined with varying



"I'm a steamroller, baby--Rollin' methods over you..."

Figure 3.16 On the need for sensitivity in the application of a new method.

student needs, makes it highly unlikely that one favorite approach will suffice. At some point, then, your role as a responsible professional will dictate that you seek the flexibility of an expanded repertoire.

Models of teaching. How to go about developing the repertoire that will enable you to behave as a responsible professional has not been satisfactorily "worked out" in the teaching profession. Physicians, lawyers, and architects, for example, typically undergo long internships, residencies and/or apprenticeships in order to develop the skills and breadth of knowledge necessary for effective performance in their respective fields. In these professions, novices learn from long-term formal associations with experts. But in education there are no such provisions -- one is left to learn pretty much alone. Working alone, and having access to few resources, it is very difficult for teachers to grow professionally.

We recommend initially that teachers consider adopting methods that have already been worked out and proven useful, at least in particular contexts. If, in your preservice preparation, you did not encounter the research evidence discussed earlier in this chapter, then by all means those findings (along with the derived teaching models -- direct instruction and active teaching) should be worked into your planning and problem solving activities. As we mentioned

earlier, the available research on teaching can serve at least to help form a beginning repertoire.

But how does one go about moving beyond the basics? One resource we strongly recommend is a book titled Models of Teaching (Joyce and Weil, 1980, second edition). This text contains more than 20 different approaches to teaching, many of which can be readily adopted with only a minimal amount of coaching and assistance from others. Bruce Joyce and Marsh Weil have organized the models into "families" according to their purposes and/or psychological or philosophical underpinnings. In order to "whet your appetite," we have profiled several models from three of the families -- behavioral, information processing, and social interaction. A brief explanation of the three families is given here:

> Behavioral models are all based (as you might expect) on behavior theory. The focus of both the theory and the models is changing behavior by gaining control over the environmental circumstances of the behavior (i.e., the preceding stimuli, the behavior itself and the consequences of the behavior). These models are primarily useful for teaching facts and skills, controlling inadequate behavior, and reducing anxiety.
>
> Information processing models focus on students' intellectual capability, methods of inquiry, mastery of subject matter, and general memory skills. The strength of models from this family is their acknowledgement of the active role which learners take in directing their own learning.

Social models are concerned with building cooperative relationships among learners, engagement with the democratic process, working productivity, and negotiating social realities. These models tend to give students a great deal of responsibility for their own learning - especially in terms of constructing personal conceptions of social reality.

Our "profile" of three models from each of these families is shown in Tables 3.1, 2, and 3. It should be apparent from your examination of these profiles that there indeed are many ways to teach (and to learn). Some of the models show the teacher clearly at the forefront and totally in charge, while others feature the role of the student. We would especially like to direct your attention to the columns which describe the main purposes or intents of each model. Notice that two kinds of "purposes" are listed -- those which are primary to the model and those which are indirect or nurturant. The distinction which Joyce and Weil have made is important because it recognizes that the "environment" created by a particular model can have important residual or "nurturant" effects. In some cases, a teacher might reasonably select a model which produces relatively weak basic (primary) academic effects but has powerful effects in other areas such as social relationships and higher-order thinking skills.

The Phases shown in each Table are to give you a sense of the instructional flow of the models. It is obvious from looking across the various models that they all "flow" somewhat

Table 3.1

Profile of Three Behavioral Models

Model	Purpose		Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase V
	Primary	Nurturant					
Contingency Management	Training academic skills, knowledge; promoting self-management		SPECIFY FINAL PERFORMANCE • Identify, define target behavior • Specify desired outcome • Plan measurement, recording	ASSESS ENTRY BEHAVIOR • Observe, record behavior • Attend to context	FORMULATE CONTINGENCIES • Organize environment • Select reinforcers, scholars • Complete plans for behavior shaping	INSTITUTE PROGRAM • Carry out program	EVALUATE PROGRAM • Measure program effects
Self Management	Increase selected behaviors, decrease maladaptive behaviors	Increase sense of control Increase self esteem	INTRODUCTION TO BEHAVIORAL PRINCIPLES • Teach that control is function of environment • Explain principles • Establish willingness to participate	ESTABLISH BASELINE • Specify target behavior • Collect data, noting proceeding stimuli and consequences	SET UP SELF-CONTROL SYSTEM • Decide on environment, reinforcers • Set short-term, long-term goals • Write up contract • Agree on process	MONITOR/MODIFY PROGRAM • Conduct program as planned • Meet with instructor to review progress	
Training Model	Develop skills in variety of domains	Feeling of self-worth	CLARIFY OBJECTIVES	EXPLAIN THEORY OR RATIONALE OF PERFORMANCE	DEMONSTRATE PERFORMANCE	PRACTICE WITH FEEDBACK	PROMOTING TRANSFER TO "REAL WORLD"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 1.2

Profile of Three Information Processing Models

Model	Purpose		Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV
	Primary	Nurturant				
Concept Attainment	Concept learning Concept building strategies Learning nature of concepts Inductive reasoning	Logical reasoning Tolerance of ambiguity	PRESENTING DATA, CONCEPT IDENTIFICATION • Teacher presents examples • Students compare attributes in POS, NEG examples • Students generate and test hypotheses • Students give concept definition	TESTING ACQUISITION OF CONCEPT • Students identify new examples as yes or no • Teacher confirms student hypotheses • Students generate additional examples	ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES UTILIZED • Students describe process • Students discuss role of hypotheses and attributes	
Advance Organizer	Building conceptual strategies Meaningful acquisition of information	Teach precise thinking Promote inquiry habits	PRESENTATION OF ADVANCE ORGANIZER • Discuss aims of lesson • Present organizer • Activate students' relevant knowledge	PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL • Make organization of material explicit • Explicate logical order of learning • Maintain attention • Present material	STRENGTHENING COGNITIVE ORGANIZATION • Promote integrative reconciliation • Promote active reception learning • Promote critical approach to subject	
Inquiry Training	Teach scientific process skills Promote inquiry strategies	Promote autonomy in learning Tolerance of ambiguity Promote spirit of creativity Learn nature of knowledge	ENCOUNTER WITH PROBLEM • Explanation of inquiry procedures • Present discrepent event	DATA GATHERING AND VERIFICATION • Collecting information about discrepant event • Verify that problem exists	EXPERIMENTATION • Isolate relevant variables • Hypothesize causal relationships	FORMULATE EXPLANATION • Generate rules or explanations ANALYSIS OF PROCESS • Discuss inquiry process

Table 1.1

Profile of Three Social (Interaction) Models

Model	Purpose		Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Phase IV	Phase V
	Primary	Nurturant					
Group Investigation	Promotes constructionist view of knowledge Promotes disciplined inquiry Promotes group processing	Respect for others Independence as learner Social inquiry skills	ENCOUNTER PUZZLING OR DISTURBING SITUATION	EXPLORE PERSONAL REACTIONS	ORGANIZE TASK, PARTICIPANTS FOR FURTHER STUDY	INDEPENDENT AND GROUP STUDY	ANALYZE PROGRESS: RECYCLE ACTIVITY BY INTRODUCING ADDITIONAL INQUIRY
Social Inquiry	Explore social issues Promote commitment to civic improvement	Respect for dignity Knowledge of social action Tolerance in social dialogue	PRESENT PROBLEM OR DILEMMA	DEVELOP HYPOTHESES AS GUIDES TO INQUIRY	DEFINE, CLARIFY HYPOTHESES	EXPLORE ASSUMPTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LOGIC	GATHER FACTS, EVIDENCE; FORM GENERALIZATIONS
Simulation	Learning concepts and skills Knowledge of systems (social, political, economic)	Critical thinking Empathy Ability to face consequences	ORIENTATION • Present topic of simulation • Explain purpose of simulation	PARTICIPANT TRAINING • Set up gearing scenario • Assign roles • Conduct practice session	SIMULATION OPERATIONS • Conduct game • Provide feedback • Clarify misconceptions • Keep simulation moving	PARTICIPANT DEBRIEFING • Summarize events; perceptions, insights, difficulties • Analyze process • Compare to real world situation • Relate to course content	

differently -- some in fact are radically different from each other. Students find also that their responsibilities change quite noticeably from model to model. Try to think of these various possibilities as tools to use in the search for best ways of teaching, given the variety of students, goals, and contexts for which you will be responsible. These and other models are available to enhance your problem solving power in difficult teaching circumstances. The more you use them, the broader and more fluent your repertoire will become.

Your conception of teaching. As we have tried to illustrate, there are many approaches to teaching. Some approaches are tied directly to the rapidly growing body of research on classroom teaching. Other models have been derived from the psychological or philosophical conceptions of the learner. No one model or one "family" of models will be adequate for the challenges you will face as a teacher. You will need to work hard to expand your beginning repertoire. And, as you begin to explore different ways to teach, keep in mind that you are shaping your own personal conception of teaching. The trick is to not simply acquire methods or techniques just for the sake of having them. Your basic problem is to better understand teaching, and to recognize that you can shape your own growth by being a good student of the teaching process.

We have suggested that you begin to shape your professional growth by understanding that teachers do make a difference in student learning. The research evidence on this point cannot be ignored. The research evidence also cannot give you a complete conception of teaching. This will have to be acquired through your own personal adjustment to teaching, and through your collegial interactions with others. We encourage you to develop a dialogue with other professionals and to keep it going.

References
Chapter 3

Fisher, C. W., Berliner, D. C., Filby, N. M., Marliave, R. S., Cahen, L. S., & Dishaw, M. M. (1980). Teaching behaviors, academic learning time, and student achievement. In C. Denham & A. Lieberman (Eds.), Time to learn. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute of Education.

Good, T. (1983). Research on classroom teaching. In L. S. Shulman & G. Sykes (Eds.), Handbook of teaching and policy. New York: Longman.

Good, T., & Grouws, D. (1983). Active mathematics instruction. New York: Longman.

Joyce, B., & Weil, M. (1980). Models of teaching (2nd Ed.). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Rosenshine, B. (1983). Teaching functions in instructional programs. The Elementary School Journal, 83, 335-352.

Chapter 4

Classroom Management and Discipline

Introduction

Any honest discussion of classroom management and discipline will begin with a theme we've used before. Perhaps you've guessed it already! There are no single best ways, magic cures, or short cuts to good classroom management. Teachers who appear to "breeze through" the school day -- staying on schedule, experiencing few problems, and even appearing to have some energy left at the end of the day -- quite likely do know some things you don't know, but you can be sure those things aren't magic. You can also be sure that the essential problems of good classroom management are solvable -- even by beginners. Basically, what is required is a fundamental understanding of what constitutes a good learning environment, and a willingness to work hard to produce the necessary conditions.

This chapter is designed to orient you to the attitudes, skills, and techniques which are associated with effective classroom management. We begin by suggesting that your success will ultimately depend on the attitudes and expectations which you bring to the classroom. Specifically, desirable learning environments are created when teachers are academically oriented, provide a warm and supportive climate, and communicate reasonable expectations to students. The extent to which you can accomplish these goals will govern, over the long haul, the spirit and enthusiasm with which students approach learning.

Smooth-running classrooms do not happen automatically, however, even with the proper teacher and student attitudes and expectations in place. How you organize and administer the classroom will have an important bearing on whether you spend the majority of your time promoting learning or confronting management and discipline problems. Again, there are no secrets or cute devices which we can offer as short cuts, but we do think you will find several general principles of classroom organization to be very useful.

Prevent or remediate? This question has an obvious and easy answer which we're sure you understand. What is the old saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"? According to research on classroom management, this is what really separates successful teachers from those who are not so successful -- the ability to prevent problems before they occur. We will address both prevention and remediation, but it's very clear where you should plan to devote the bulk of your energy and skill.

Finally, you need to know that there are systems or "models" which have already been worked out and tested in the areas of management and discipline. Of course, as we discussed in the chapter on instruction, there is a very low probability that any one model will suffice in terms of addressing the great variety of situations and problems you will encounter. We advised then, as we do now, that you learn a variety of approaches -- not for the sake of simply having them, but because each can teach you

something about the process of managing classrooms, and can also make you a better student of teaching.

Creating an Appropriate Classroom Environment

In preparing this portion of the Handbook, we consulted a great variety of resources ranging from basic research studies to general essays on the topic of management and discipline. There is a tremendous amount of evidence and advice "out there" in the research literature -- and methods for handling particular classroom problems vary considerably. There is one point, however, on which there seems to be universal agreement. That point, quite simply, is that the teacher's main focus in the classroom must be the promotion of an academic orientation, and a classroom environment conducive to learning.

Promoting a business-like academic orientation seems to depend, moreover, on the attitudes and expectations which teachers bring to the profession. In the previous chapter, we discussed the role of teacher expectation, particularly as it related to high and low achievers. We discovered that differential teacher behavior toward highs and lows could be linked in many cases to the academic expectations which teachers hold for individual students.

Likewise, the expectations which teachers have for classroom learning in general can have an important influence on how the classroom is organized and managed for instruction. Tom Good and Jere Brophy (1984) have identified an array of expectations which

EXPECTATIONS ABOUT TEACHING

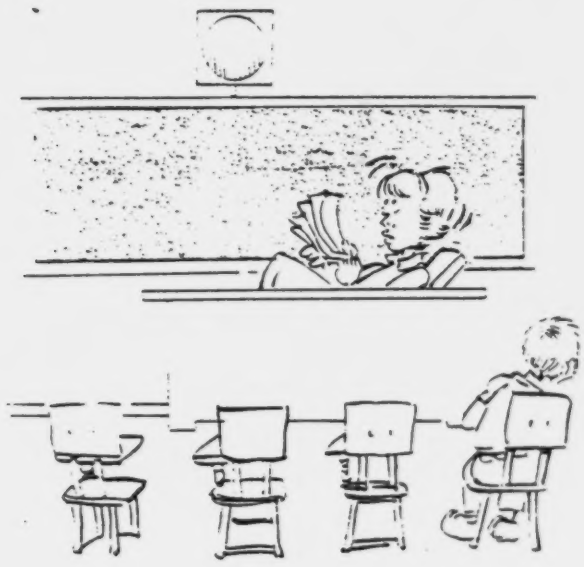
Success in teaching depends on many factors, of course, but a persistent conclusion of researchers and educational analysts is that the groundwork for good teaching lies in the teacher having the proper attitude about teaching. Tom Good and Jere Brophy (1984) make a strong case in favor of the following basic teacher expectations.

- A teacher's main responsibility is to teach.
- Teachers should enjoy teaching.
- Teachers must understand the crucial aspects of teaching.
- Teachers should expect that all students meet minimum objectives.
- Teachers should expect to teach individuals, not groups.
- Teachers should assume good intentions and positive self-concepts from students.
- Teachers should expect to be obeyed.
- Teachers should expect to experience some difficulty.

they believe are essential to successful classroom teaching performance. Their list, which is consistent with much of the writing on classroom management, is shown in our second FOCUS statement on teacher expectations (recall that we introduced the concept in Chapter 3). Looking at the list you can see that the general theme is heavily, and very positively, oriented toward teaching and learning. Essentially, teachers should expect to teach, they should know the essentials, and they should expect students to learn. Also made clear is the notion that teaching will not be easy -- you should expect to have to work hard at teaching. The teacher shown in Figure 4.1 may not have gotten the message that teachers are expected to teach (and work hard at it) -- but as the second frame suggests, she may soon be enlightened!

Having the proper expectations about teaching will not guarantee success. However, it is difficult to conceive of successful teachers who do not possess the basic attitudinal "sets" described here. For example, teachers who expect that certain crucial instructional functions must be satisfied will be more likely to interpret success or failure in terms of the actions they have taken to arrange a proper learning environment. Look again at some of the models and "systems" of teaching presented in Chapter 3 (e.g., "active teaching" and "direct instruction"). Teachers who are serious about teaching will vary in the details of their instruction, but the necessary structural

(a) "You mean you're all from Ms. Shippimout's class?"



(b) "Ms. Shippimout, please come to the office immediately!"

Figure 4.1 This is one way to keep the classroom quiet and orderly! Tempting as this technique might be at times, it seems to miss the spirit of teaching.

elements will be preserved. For direct systems of instruction, Madeline Hunter (1984) refers to lesson templates (i.e., anticipatory sets, objectives, instructional input, modeling, checking for understanding, guided practice, and independent practice) as the "basic white sauce" of teaching. For Good and Brophy, the crucial elements are task presentation, diagnosis, remediation, and enrichment. What is important is the idea that teachers who adopt a coherent instructional model (regardless of which model) will be able to convey to students a proper attitudinal set for each element of instruction. Students need to know that instruction does have a logical flow and that there are no arbitrary tasks thrown in (i.e., "she's doing this just to keep me busy").

As Good and Brophy point out, expectations tend to be self-sustaining. If both teacher and students have a defeatist attitude about certain aspects of instruction or what can be accomplished, that attitude tends to prevail and become the norm for the classroom. If, on the other hand, students and teacher have more positive expectations (i.e., teacher can teach and students can learn), those attitudes become the norm and (happily) prevail even during those times when things aren't going so well.

Classroom Administration

The attitudes and expectations which we have just discussed "set the stage" for a smoothly functioning classroom. Without

such expectations (i.e., that the classroom is a warm and supportive but purposeful and businesslike environment), it is doubtful that classrooms would operate as effectively as some do. However, it's just as important to understand that proper attitudes and high expectations do not, in themselves, result in the kind of classroom management and discipline you would like to have. Consider what might be the ideal -- a classroom which runs so automatically (see our fanciful depiction, Figure 4.2) that

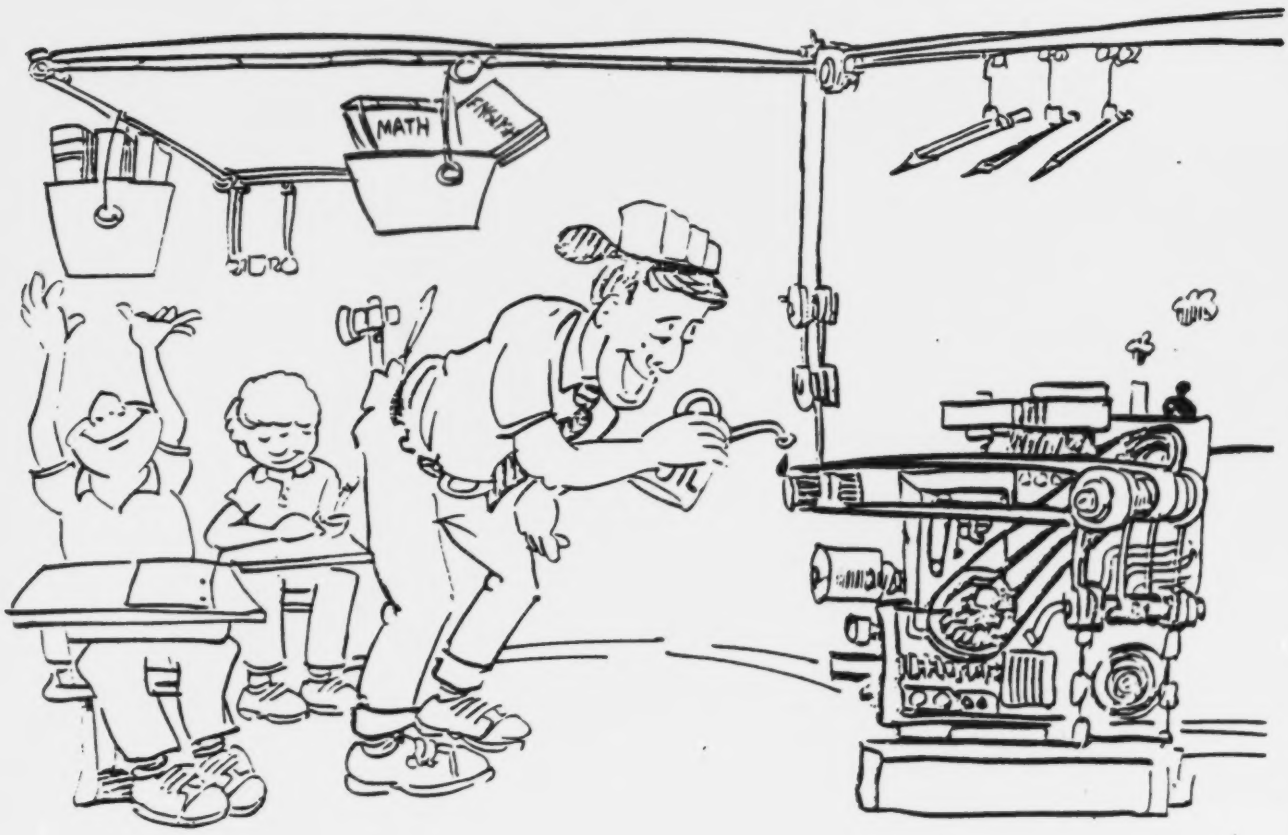


Figure 4.2 This classroom is running in "high gear." Classroom scenarios where everything works this well are possible, if you work to make them happen.

the teacher seems to devote very little effort to actual management tasks. In such a classroom, the pace is brisk; students seem to know what to do; they complete assignments with little apparent difficulty; and transitions are made with very little, if any, direct information from the teacher. Problems do occur, but the teacher is able to deal with them quickly without undue disruption. Most of the teacher's time and energy is spent on instructional functions -- not on management per se. Sound feasible?

Well, research suggests that scenarios like the above are not only feasible, but very possible given that you're willing to work to make them happen. However, some fairly specific steps are required, most of which are consistent with the following small set of key assumptions, taken from Looking in Classrooms, Tom Good and Jere Brophy's (1984) highly acclaimed text on classroom teaching.

Key Assumptions for Classroom Management

- Students will be more likely to follow classroom rules when they understand and accept them.
- Management should be approached with an eye toward maximizing the time students spend in productive work, rather than from a negative viewpoint stressing control of misbehavior.
- The teacher's goal is to develop inner self-control in the students, not merely to control them.
- Teachers will minimize discipline problems if their students are regularly engaged in meaningful work geared to their interests and aptitudes.

Rules. Rules! Rules! Rules! Rules! Why? We suspect that many of you may be tempted to try to run your classroom without rules. After all, if you're highly motivated and willing to cooperate, shouldn't your students be? Why start the year with the negative connotation which rules imply?

Answers to these and similar questions about rules can be given quite straightforwardly. It is important to keep in mind that rules are not designed to control students' behavior. Not only is such a connotation inconsistent with one or more of the assumptions given above, but it would take an enormous number of rules just to cover all the possible behaviors of interest. The teacher in Figure 4.3 has made the mistake of assuming that rules need to be written for every possible move her students might make. Imagine the students' problem in just trying to remember all the rules, let alone obeying them!

The basic function of rules is to convey to students your general expectations for how the classroom should run. Students have a right to know what to expect, and will appreciate knowing in advance what the ongoing classroom routines will entail. Without some fairly explicit guidelines (rules and procedures), it would be impossible for you to conduct the classroom efficiently enough to keep students productively engaged in instructional activities.

"By the time we read this, it'll be summer vacation."

Figure 4.3

Specific advice about selecting or deciding upon rules (and procedures) will be given in the next chapter, which covers in some detail the very first days of school. We think you will be encouraged by the richness of recent research, which shows what more effective teachers do to get the school year off to a good start.

One general issue which we will deal with in this chapter, however, concerns the extent to which you are willing to allow

students to participate in the development of rules and procedures. The literature on classroom management and discipline is fairly consistent in suggesting that students be allowed to have a role in the decision making process. Probably the quickest way to get off to a bad start is to have students interpret your procedures and rules as being arbitrary and overly prescriptive. Putting yourself into the position of "enforcer" (of unpopular and not clearly defensible rules) invites management and discipline problems (meaning you will be spending an inordinate amount of time correcting behavior and "putting out fires"). A way out of this predicament is to define clearly the "problems" that need solutions and then invite students to propose rules or procedures that will get the job done. The likelihood of students developing a commitment to class management rules and procedures is much higher when they have a sense of ownership over them.

Giving students some room to exercise their own judgment with respect to classroom rules and procedures also leads you in the right direction with respect to helping them develop independent responsibility for their own actions. As Figure 4.4 suggests, you shouldn't expect flawless performance in the exercise of responsibility. But then, how can you expect growth in children without opportunity to experiment and even make mistakes?

"Decisions, decisions!"

Figure 4.4 You can't expect this little guy to make the angelic choice every time -- he needs to experiment and make mistakes.

This last point brings us to a major caveat about rules. How do students learn to exercise good judgment and to behave in accordance with reasonable rules? If you follow the advice usually given -- that rules should not be overly rigid and prescriptive -- then you invite confusion and mistakes that will require corrective action. Consider a couple of general rules which many effective managers include in their repertoire:

RESPECT AND BE POLITE TO ALL PEOPLE

RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY

What do these rules mean in the day to day, hour to hour, and minute to minute press of classroom life? We all have a general idea, but in terms of specifics quite a bit of room is left to individual judgment! The answer is that you will have to teach students what these rules mean -- you will have to demonstrate how they can be successful. As illustrated in Figure 4.5, you will essentially be giving students a "roadmap" to correct and acceptable behavior. In the next chapter, which is designed to help you "get started" during the first few days of school, you will see that we stress teaching students how to satisfy the expectations which you have worked out jointly with them. Lewis Smith and William G. Geoffrey (1972) have referred to

"Gosh, Mister -- I just wanna go to the bathroom!"

Figure 4.5 You will be showing students a "roadmap" to correct and acceptable behavior.

this initial training as "grooving" the children into acceptable classroom routines. The teacher does this by modeling correct "moves," having students explicitly practice procedures, giving detailed feedback, and generally talking a lot about what is expected. Essentially, then, the establishment of classroom rules and procedures is an instructional problem. We suggest, in fact, that it would be reasonable to consider employing the "training" model (or a reasonable substitute) which was included in our discussion of models of teaching in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.3).

Using classroom time. Closely associated with the establishment of rules and procedures is the effective use of classroom time. As you already know from our discussion of the BTES studies and other research concerning utilization of time, teachers who are most effective tend to be miserly with classroom time. To a significant extent the amount of learning which occurs in schools depends on the amount of available class time in which students are successfully engaged with the academic content (ALT, remember?). Effective teachers therefore know how to minimize loss of time (downtime) due to problems, getting started, handling out materials, transitioning from one activity to another, and the like.

From a discipline perspective, the minimization of downtime means that students who are productively engaged cannot (at the same time) create class disruptions. It is good to keep in mind that downtime can suddenly appear when least expected. Consider a class assignment which you worked hard to prepare, and which worked exactly as expected, except that some students breezed through the work in record time. Unless you've got an alternative assignment up your sleeve, what you have is downtime (At least in Figure 4.6 the class has not become disruptive).

Management techniques. So far, the primary message we have been trying to deliver is that smoothly run, fast

Figure 4.6 Take a good look -- this could happen to you! The idea is to minimize these scenes -- you can't avoid them altogether.

paced, academically oriented classrooms are places where disruption and discipline problems will be minimized. Critical ingredients in the successful management of classrooms include expectations on the part of teachers and students, good classroom procedures, and effective use of time. Does all this sound a little too easy? We think the account thus far is a bit idealistic because it has not accounted for the teaching skills and techniques that are required to keep classrooms on track. How do effective teachers do it?

One of the currently most popular portraits of the skilled manager has been painted by Jacob Kounin (1970), who discovered that successful managers are distinguished not by their skill in getting out of problems, but by their ability to avoid them. Kounin's videotape study of classrooms led him to propose several techniques as being especially helpful in keeping the classroom running smoothly. The main elements of a skilled teacher's repertoire are described in our FOCUS on the skilled teacher's management repertoire.

Classroom research conducted during the past 10-15 years has provided quite a bit of empirical support for Kounin's recommendations about classroom management. As you can see, the recommendations are in keeping with our introductory comments. Most good management practices involve hard work and skill. One final image from Kounin's work is the notion of overlapping -- the ability to manage multiple tasks or routines at the same time. As depicted in Figure 4.8, the busy, hard working, skilled manager is quite a juggler. Interestingly, this analogy fits well with our overall theme of learning to teach. Just as the competent juggler acquires expertise and smoothness only after hundreds of hours of practice and experience, so it goes for the novice teacher. That is exactly why, in the previous chapter, we suggested the gradual expansion of your repertoire of teaching styles or models. Learning to teach does take time.

The Skilled Teacher's Management Repertoire

• Withitness	Simply put, the teacher knows what is going on in the classroom and the students know the teacher knows what is happening. (see Figure 4.7 for a simple example). Through mild desists the teacher stops off-task behaviors before they become serious. Alternatives are suggested in place of deviant behavior. Reinforcement is utilized for acceptable behavior, and the teacher continues to teach what to do.
• Smoothness	Getting from one activity to another while keeping most students with you is also a good predictor of classroom success. Additionally, good managers rarely let ongoing activities get off track. Interruptions are minimized and teacher responses to unrelated issues (e.g., a tardy slip) are delayed until a natural break in activities occurs.
• Group Alerting	Effective managers never assume that groups will continue working without problems. Through good question asking and recitation practices pupils are kept involved in the lesson. As needed, alerting cues are used to inform nonactive students that they could be called upon.
• Accountability	Effective managers know that work involvement is increased when students know they will be held accountable. Methods used included getting students to show their work, inviting peer cooperation, and prompting responses concerning work in progress.

Figure 4.7 Teachers who are "withit" have eyes in the back of their heads.

"Look Ma -- both hands and all the concentration I can muster -- constantly!"

Figure 4.8 An effective classroom manager needs to be quite the juggler.

Prevention and Correction of Misbehavior

As we have already reported, the evidence on effective classroom managers suggests that the key to good discipline is prevention. Everything we have said up to this section has been aimed at producing a classroom environment in which disruptions and discipline problems are minimized. For example, Kounin's techniques are designed to enhance the academic productivity of students and simultaneously reduce the probability of serious disruptions. But what else can be done?

More about prevention. Since the topic of prevention is so crucial, several additional ideas should be given attention. One concerns teachers' attitudes toward students. Much has been said about the creation of an academically oriented classroom, but less about the personal relationships between teacher and student. Figure 4.9 depicts two kinds of relationships -- one is cold and distant, the other warm and supportive. Although it is quite obvious which posture is most desirable, achievement of this posture is not always easy. The basic strategy is to conduct yourself in such a manner that students will respect you and want to please, rather than just obey. Teachers in both elementary and secondary settings are advised to establish close personal relationships with their students, but cautioned to maintain their role of teacher

(a) (b)

Figure 4.9 Although you'll be tempted, at times, to assume the pose of the beginning teacher in (a), your goal is to be warm, supportive and respected.

(not friend). Also, keep in mind that techniques acceptable with younger students (e.g., hand on shoulder or head) will not be acceptable for older students who may be in the process of sorting out competing (and simultaneous) needs for closeness and autonomy.

A related concept is teacher credibility. One of the many ways to get off to a bad start is to demonstrate to

students that your words do not match your actions. In addition to liking and getting close to your students, you must establish that you mean what you say. (Students have reported for decades that they like, rather than dislike, clear expectations and consistency from teachers.)

Being adequately prepared is another concept that has been implied in our discussions but not explicitly discussed. We have all seen the teacher who fails to prepare in advance and invariably wastes class time because of either not getting started promptly or failing to keep the class running smoothly. Figure 4.10 shows the not-too-unlikely result of inadequate preparation. Notice we are stressing preparation -- this teacher may have an elegant lesson plan but is unable to carry it off due to lack of foresight about possible technical problems. Reinforcing an idea presented earlier, this notion of preparation extends to preparing for individual students as well as groups. The teacher who is well prepared will foresee the need to bring in extra work, enrichment activities, and remedial material for students who require special attention. Such planning and preparation will avoid downtime and the potential discipline problems that go with inactivity and boredom.

A final concept which has an important bearing on prevention of discipline problems is active involvement. This concept is very similar to the notion of active

The Anatomy Lesson

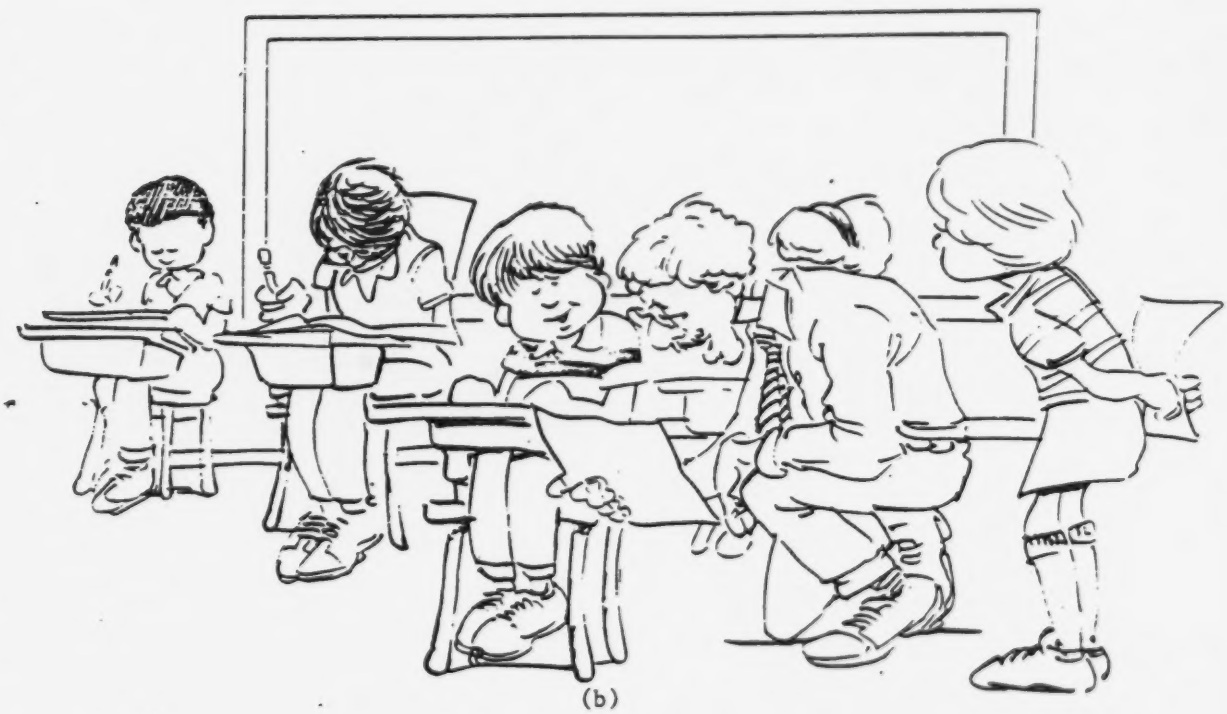
Figure 4.10 This can happen very easily, with just the right lack of preparation.

teaching discussed in the previous chapter -- in both cases teachers spend most of their time actually working with students. As depicted in Figure 4.11, there is quite a bit of room for variability between the "good" and "poor" examples. Little guesswork is required to decide where your priorities should lie!

Correction of Misbehavior. In spite of your best efforts to prevent misbehavior, there are times when your worst fears will be realized. In the event of dangerous or seriously disruptive behavior, you should be ready to take direct and immediate action. Even when misbehavior is minor, it should be dealt with before it intensifies or spreads. What we will do in this section is briefly discuss several major categories of teacher responses to misbehavior, and then refer you to existing "models" for dealing with student behavior.

Tom Good and Jere Brophy have written fairly extensively about strategies for coping with misbehavior in their previously mentioned book, Looking in Classrooms. They suggest that teachers have three basic ways of intervening directly when disruptions occur -- short of applying one or more of the complex "models" that exist. When misbehavior is minor, but still too prominent to ignore, it can often be eliminated without disrupting the

(a)



(b)

Figure 4.11 A little active involvement can make all the difference between (a) and (b).

flow of classroom activity. Nonverbal signals such as eye contact, gestures, or touch are sometimes sufficient to redirect student attention. Also, during recitation or other teacher-directed group activities, simply directing questions or comments to inattentive students will often bring them back into the lesson.

If these behavior management strategies are insufficient, it is sometimes possible to redirect the inappropriate behavior by simply demanding the behavior you want (e.g., "Go back to your seat! Stop talking <u>now</u>! Look at me John, pay attention!) In all cases you should focus on the <u>behavior</u> you want to influence. Do not belittle or humiliate the student.

A third approach suggested by Good and Brophy is to remind the student or students about a rule or procedure which is being violated. Your statement, "Susan, our procedure here is take turns," may be all that is needed -- especially if the rule is well understood and basically accepted by students as reasonable. Such reminders allow you to avoid negative encounters or lengthy explanations about what to do.

For persistent misbehavior, teachers frequently resort to the use of punishment. What is interesting about punishment is the extent to which so many people fail to

understand its effects. When punishment is used, there is usually an immediate decrease in the behavior being punished. This effect produces in the teacher a feeling of control which is satisfying (positive reinforcement) or a sense of relief that the negative stimulus has been removed (negative reinforcement). In either case the teacher is rewarded for his/her actions and tends to move in the direction of using more punishment. At the same time, however, the treatment (punishment) has the very limited effect of <u>suppressing</u> or controlling the behavior. Punishment does not teach students <u>what to do</u> nor does it modify the desire to misbehave. Also of concern is the problem that punishment frequently results in negative side effects such as anger, anxiety, and withdrawal -- obviously compounding the teacher's problem.

In spite of these problems, punishment <u>is</u> sometimes the correct action to take. However, its use should be governed by several principles (derived from behavioral theory). Specifically, punishment should be applied immediately, consistently (in accordance with established rules), sufficiently (i.e., strong enough to produce the results desired) and unemotionally. In addition, it is extremely important that you avoid labeling students or attacking them personally. The student who is attacked personally will likely feel resentment and anger, which could, incidentally,

spread to the entire class. The student who has been dealt with in a non-threatening, neutral fashion will more likely learn what is expected with little emotional involvement. Punishment, then, is a tool which can be useful, but you should plan to use it with great caution.

To conclude this chapter, we encourage you to continue to expand your repertoire of classroom management and discipline strategies. To help you move in that direction, we have included here a summary of three often mentioned "models," similar to the models of instruction presented in Chapter 3. Two of these, as well as several others, are described in C.M. Charles' (1985) book, Building Classroom Discipline: From Models to Practice and Jack Martin's (1981) Models of Classroom Management. Thomas Gordon's (1974) model can be found in his book, T.E.T.: Teacher Effectiveness Training. As you can see from Table 4.1, these three models present a variety of approaches and viewpoints about the causes and solutions to misbehavior. As we suggested with respect to instructional models (see Chapter 3), no one model will likely suffice; however, having several in your repertoire will provide you with a broad base of strategies to enhance your day to day problem solving tasks.

Table 4.1

Profile of 3 Classroom Management Models

Model	Rationale	Principles	Techniques and Applications
Gordon (T.E.T.: Teacher Effectiveness Training)	To develop a "no-lose" situation for teacher and students	1. Teacher takes responsibility for how he or she feels about the situation by stating I-messages. 2. Avoids negative connotations. 3. Willingness to change for both teacher and student. 4. Contains minimal negative evaluation of the student. 5. Doesn't injure relationship between teacher and student.	• "No Lose" Approach to resolving conflicts • Six-step problem solving process which emphasizes active listening and teacher-student involvement: 1. Define problem 2. Generate possible solutions 3. Evaluate solutions 4. Decide which solution is best 5. Determine how to implement decision 6. Assess how well solution solved problem
Glasser (Reality Therapy)	To help students learn responsible behavior within the classroom environment	1. Problems stem from an individual's inability to fulfill basic needs. 2. Help the students learn to fulfill their needs within the context of the classroom by developing responsible behavior. 3. A positive self-concept is enhanced through individual involvement with others. 4. Encourage students to act in a socially responsible manner and develop positive appraisal of self.	• Seven major phases of Reality Therapy, emphasizing meeting one's basic needs within the context of social reality • Classroom meetings • Ten steps to good discipline: 1. List your no-nos 2. Start fresh 3. Better day tomorrow 4. Quiet correction 5. Make a plan 6. Conference time 7. Off to the castle 8. Off to the office 9. Tolerance Day 10. Where there's life there's hope
Kounin (Group Managerial Approach)	Teachers' actions are designed to prevent disruptions before they occur	1. "Good" teaching solves most classroom problems before they start. 2. By having a repertoire of teaching skills, strategies, and styles, the teacher can increase on-task behavior and decrease the frequency of disruptions and misbehaviors.	• Teaching variables basic to effective classroom management and discipline: 1. "Withitness" 2. Smoothness of transition 3. Group alerting 4. Learner accountability 5. Overlapping 6. Momentum 7. Variety

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

References
Chapter 4

Charles, C. M. (1985). Building classroom discipline: From models to practice, (2nd Ed.). New York: Longman.

Good, T., & Brophy, J. (1984). Looking in classrooms, (3rd Ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Gordon, T. (1974). T.E.T.: Teacher Effectiveness Training. New York: David McKay Company, Inc.

Hunter, M. (1984): Knowing, teaching, and supervising. In P. L. Hosford, (Ed.), Using what we know about teaching. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kounin, J. (1970). Discipline and group management in classrooms. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Martin, J. (1981). Models of classroom management. Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Limited.

Smith, L., & Geoffrey, W. (1972). The complexities of an urban classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Chapter 5

Getting Started

Effective teachers have a very clear idea of the type of classroom conditions and student behaviors that are necessary for good learning environments. These teachers work hard during the first few days of school to establish themselves as instructional leaders in the classroom. They realize the need for establishing an efficient system of rules and procedures, and for communicating this system to the pupils. Their ability to motivate and involve students, monitor classroom activities, and respond to student concerns, enables them to create a smoothly running classroom within the first few weeks of school.

The activities at the beginning of the school year are important -- they set the climate for the remainder of the year. Planning for a classroom in which students are highly involved in learning activities, and free from chronic misbehavior, begins long before the first day of school. In this chapter we discuss some basic principles for getting the year started -- these should help you as you plan those first crucial days of school. Many of the principles are drawn from results of a series of studies on effective classroom management at the beginning of the school year, conducted by Carolyn Evertson, Ed Emmer, and their colleagues at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas at Austin (1984).

Before School Begins

> **Determining rules and procedures:** Good classroom management is based on students' understanding of the behaviors expected of them.

A logical starting point for creating a smoothly running classroom is to identify sets of rules and procedures. Since teachers are expected to enforce school rules, you will first want to learn the rules and procedures of the building. Most school districts and schools have orientation programs before the beginning of school. School rules and administrative procedures for students are often discussed at these meetings. Your school may in fact have a handbook of rules and policies. Other teachers can also provide you with information about the school policies and priorities.

After obtaining this information, you can begin planning for the classroom. As we discussed in the previous chapter, the management system you establish should reflect the goals and expectations you have for your students.

Rules and procedures, as described in the research on effective classroom management strategies, refer to stated behavioral expectations. Rules identify general expectations or standards that apply across activities and situations. For example, "Respect school property and the property of others,"

covers a large set of behaviors that should always be practiced. Often, more specific rules are stated, such as "Raise your hand before speaking."

Procedures usually apply to specific activities and routine events in the classroom. For example, most teachers establish procedures for collecting assignments, sharpening pencils, and leaving the room to go to lockers, the bathroom, or lunch.

The rules and procedures you establish should be workable and appropriate for the age of the students. Although many different rules are possible, a set of five to eight should be sufficient to cover the most important areas of behavior. Limiting the number of rules will help students to better remember them, and will stress their importance (recall Figure 4.3!). The rules should be clear and concise, focusing on the positive rather than the negative whenever possible. Reasonable consequences for breaking the rules should be determined as well. What will happen the first time a student disrupts a group lesson or distracts other students who are involved in seatwork? The second time...? As we discussed in Chapter 4, students may be asked to help decide on classroom rules. This will encourage them to take more responsibility for their own behavior. The set of rules may be posted, or copies may be given to each student for easy reference. Making the rules visible will help to reinforce their importance.

Typically, you will have more procedures than rules in your classroom. Procedures should be stated clearly, concisely, and in a positive manner -- and consequences for not following them should be established. While you may want to provide students with copies of the procedures, you probably will not post them in the room. Later in the chapter, we will discuss some strategies for presenting rules and procedures to the students.

> Preparing the Physical Environment: Good room arrangement is important for both classroom management and effective instructional practices.

You may find it easier to plan other aspects of classroom management after you have an idea of the physical features of your classroom. A familiarity with the physical environment helps to establish the need for more specific rules and procedures. So, for many teachers, room arrangement is planned in conjunction with rules and procedures.

Good room arrangement is important for classroom management and instruction because it helps the teacher cope with the complex demands of teaching twenty to thirty students at one time. During the day, many activities will occur. You and the class will use a variety of materials, and students will move about and across different areas of the room. Appropriate room preparation and arrangement of materials helps to conserve time

for instruction and learning, and minimizes interruptions and delays.

Evertson and her colleagues suggest that to design a physical setting that is conducive to student involvement, you should keep four goals in mind. First, be sure you can easily see the students. Clear lines of sight must be maintained so that you can monitor all students at all times. This is a major key in the area of behavior management.

Second, the seating arrangement should allow students to see you, the chalkboard, and the projection screen without having to move their seats or sit in an awkward position. Such conditions encourage students not to pay attention, and valuable time is lost when students must rearrange their seating and then refocus their attention on the lesson.

Third, books and supplies should be placed where they are easily accessible. Materials which students will use often should be stored in areas where they can be obtained with the least possible distraction. This will help minimize time spent preparing for and cleaning up from daily activities.

Finally, highly trafficked areas such as the pencil sharpener, water fountain, and your desk, should be separated from each other. These areas should have plenty of space around them, and be easily accessible. Because the classroom is a workspace for students and teachers, it should be arranged to permit orderly movement, few distractions, and efficient use of

available space. Inefficient use of workspace produces scenes such as the one depicted in Figure 5.1.

In addition to these four goals, several other considerations should affect the way you arrange your room. For example, physical spaces should reflect your plans for utilizing different types of instructional arrangements. Will you be engaged in small group work? Will students work at independent learning centers? How about an informal reading area? Will students need to move desks or chairs to these areas? If so, what is the most efficient way for furniture to be moved? Where are the materials stored that are needed in these specific areas?

"Go back to your seats! We'll be using crayons for the rest of the day."

Figure 5.1 Highly trafficked areas.

A good place to start in planning room arrangement is to decide on the area where you will conduct whole-class instruction. This will usually be near the chalkboard or the projection screen. Student desks can be arranged in a variety of ways. The main idea is to be sure all students can see you, the chalkboard, and/or the projection screen. To start the year, it may be wise to have desks in rows facing the major instructional area so that students are less likely to distract each other. Student desks should not face doorways, windows, or other areas which may be sources of distraction.

Placement of your own desk also is very important. If the desk is used to keep materials needed during presentations, it should be near the main instructional area. If you plan to do much individual work with students while seated at your desk, the desk should be placed where others will not be distracted by quiet conversation. The desk should be placed in a location that will facilitate monitoring and not interrupt traffic patterns.

When arranging work areas or centers at which students work without direct teacher supervision, again provide clear lines of sight between teacher and students. Keep in mind that centers are not a necessity, particularly at the beginning of the school year. If and when these areas are put into use, rules and procedures for utilizing them should be determined and taught to the students.

Creating a Visual Learning Environment: Visual displays can serve as a source of motivation, interest, and instruction for students.

Bulletin boards and walls are another consideration in organizing the classroom. These areas provide space for displaying student work, creating decorative touches, presenting instructionally relevant material, and posting rules, assignments, messages, etc. Older students may enjoy planning and decorating the bulletin board themselves.

An attractive bulletin board should greet the students on the first day of school. Books of bulletin board ideas are available, and other teachers can be helpful sources for ideas. Items can either be commercially bought or made by the teacher. Remember, however, that while an attractive classroom is important, you should not spend so much time decorating your room that you neglect other, more important tasks that are necessary to ensure a successful beginning of the year. The result of this improper planning is shown in Figure 5.2. Adding displays later or posting initial student assignments is advisable. Also, take care not to over-decorate the room. This can be distracting to students, and could make the room look smaller and disorganized.

"Notice my room decorations. This is what I call a good-looking classroom."

Figure 5.2

Obtaining Supplies and Providing for Storage: A smoothly running classroom also depends on having supplies ready and easily accessible.

Planning for a good beginning also includes checking to see that you have acquired all essential materials. Make sure that you have enough copies of all textbooks, supplemental materials, teacher's manuals, etc. Many supplies such as paper, a grade book, pens and pencils, chalk, scissors, paper clips, and thumb

tacks should be provided by the school. Talk to another teacher to find out what materials the school provides and what you may have to supply yourself. Also, ask that teacher about the procedures for obtaining books and supplies. You may want to browse through several other classrooms, and make a list of materials they have which you would like in your own room.

Once you have gathered your initial set of supplies, you must think about where and how to store them. Materials used frequently should be kept readily accessible. Everyday books and materials that will not be kept by the students should be stored on bookshelves, or in areas which are easily accessible. Infrequently used items (such as seasonal decorations or special project materials) can be stored in closets or on top of cabinets.

Items which need maintenance, such as overhead projectors, record players, tape recorders, televisions, and pencil sharpeners should be checked to ensure they are in working order. If necessary, obtain extension cords, spare light bulbs, and adapters. Equipment should be stored in a convenient place, and should not be distracting to students.

Getting to Know Colleagues: A good working relationship with the staff can provide invaluable information and support.

The days prior to the beginning of school should provide time to get to know other staff members and the types of assistance each can provide. It may be helpful to schedule times to talk with people, especially those who may be able to provide immediate information or support to make the beginning of the year run more smoothly. If the school does not assign you a buddy teacher, seek one out, preferably in your subject area or grade level. In Chapter 6, we talk more about establishing positive, mutually supportive relationships with people in your building.

Beginning Long-term Planning: Planning for the year helps to set a direction for all instructional events.

Making long-term plans at the beginning of the school year helps you to organize your instructional program, and to begin thinking about materials and activities to prepare as the year progresses. Building an instructional program is somewhat like building a house. A carpenter would not begin building a house without knowing what the house should look like when it's finished, obtaining all the materials needed, and making step-by-step plans to get the job done! Yes, it is a large task, especially the first time you do it. But it's a task that's well worth the initial investment of time and effort.

One way to begin long-term planning is to study the structure and organization of required texts. If you do not understand the structure of the text and related material, ask another teacher for help. Often, a brief conversation is all that's needed to provide an overview of the entire instructional program and how its various components fit together. Once you have this overall picture, you can begin to outline smaller units of instruction.

Figure 5.3 Unrealistic long-term goals.

enter the room on the first day and settle themselves quickly, relieving anxiety for some who find this a difficult decision to make. Other teachers prefer to let students select their own seats, highlighting their responsibility and ability to make educationally-sound decisions. Either way, it is important for students to have specific seats within the first few days of school. This will enable you to check attendance efficiently and learn students' names quickly.

Fire and other disaster drills. Find out the procedures used in the building and for your particular classroom. As for any other instructional event, plan to teach the procedure for the drill. Practicing before the drill will mean less confusion and apprehension during the actual drill.

Schedule of duties. Learn the duties required of teachers in your building, as well as the schedules to be followed. There may be duties which are unfamiliar -- lunch, bus, hall duty, etc. Make sure you know what is expected for each duty, and accept them cheerfully and without complaint. While such duties often seem like an imposition, they are as much a part of your job as is instruction.

The First Day of School

Activities on the First Day: Establishing a good classroom climate that supports learning begins the first day of school.

If you have followed the suggestions presented so far in this chapter, you have spent a great deal of time planning and preparing for the beginning of school. It is now time to put your plans into action.

If possible, stand near the door as students enter the room. Your name, grade level, subject area, and class roster (if appropriate), will help students find the correct room. Greet each student individually and pleasantly. Assign them to their seats or let them choose a seat. If students enter the room in an inappropriate manner, have them repeat their entrance and explain the behavior you expect for their entrance in the future. Figure 5.4 shows a teacher prepared for her initial encounter with students.

Begin the day or the class period by introducing yourself, saying something about interests, hobbies, family, etc. Since it is unlikely that all students know each other, a brief get-acquainted activity may be useful. This activity should create a low-risk atmosphere in which all students have the opportunity to introduce themselves without fear of failure or embarrassment.

Give students a short overview of the topics to be covered during the year. Mention activities that will be interesting, challenging, and meaningful so they can begin looking forward to the year. Emphasize the importance of the topics and the importance of learning and working together.

Figure 5.4 Off to a good start.

Getting off to a good start requires careful teaching of the rules and procedures that have already been decided upon. Students must be made aware of the expectations for their conduct. Because people are much more likely to follow suggestions that they understand and accept, each rule and procedure should be explained carefully as it is introduced. Use examples to help clarify your explanations. Describe the rationale for each rule and the penalties associated with it. Demonstration and practice may be required to ensure that each student (particularly younger ones) can meet expectations. Students who do not conform should be quickly and appropriately admonished, and corrective feedback should be provided. Do not go over procedures that will not be needed soon. These can be discussed when they are needed. Unless particular school rules are relevant, do not include them in the discussion.

The initial content activity should be one that students can complete successfully with little or no assistance. Although you should try not to handle routine matters while students work on this activity, you may find that there are several matters which must be taken care of immediately. An activity which can be completed independently will provide you with time to handle these matters while still monitoring students.

The initial activity should be one that helps to teach important procedures which you will want students to practice for the remainder of the year. Begin the activity by stating the

procedures that students should follow. Tell students exactly what they are supposed to do, and demonstrate the procedure whenever possible. As they use the procedure, watch them carefully and give corrective feedback about their performance. Initially, do not use an activity which involves complicated procedures, small groups, or group projects. Help students learn whole-class and seatwork procedures before trying the more complex activities.

Each instructional period during the first day should be set in an atmosphere of high interest and involvement. Activities should take into account the students' concerns for being in a new situation, by trying to lessen any anxiety which may exist. Many students are shy or have low self-esteem. Beginning-of-the-year activities should not focus attention on individuals. Special care should be taken to make all students feel that they are important, contributing members of the class. Students should feel free to ask questions and participate in discussions without fear or embarrassment. By displaying a positive and accepting attitude, you can develop feelings of trust and acceptance among your students.

End the day or the class period on a pleasant, positive note. Make the students feel that they have helped to establish a healthy atmosphere for learning and that their efforts are appreciated. This should help to set a positive tone for the next day, and the students will be eager to return to class and to work even harder.

After the First Day

The second day, and all subsequent days as you deem necessary, should include review and reinforcement of the rules and procedures already presented. In particular, be aware of new students who have not yet been introduced to the expectations of the classroom. Provide them with a copy of the rules and procedures. You may also want to ask another student to help them get oriented to the class. Continue using the procedures already introduced, introducing new procedures as needed. Students' behavior must be monitored carefully and inappropriate behavior dealt with quickly and consistently. If behavior is inappropriate, review the rules and procedures and give students corrective feedback.

With careful planning, instruction, monitoring, and feedback, the class should begin to run smoothly by the end of the first week.

The First Weeks of School

The first few weeks of school are critical ones because they set the tone for the entire school year. You must be especially organized not only for the first and second days, but for the first several weeks of school. A teacher who is not thoroughly prepared and organized during these initial weeks is likely to run into serious problems, even if he or she is prepared for and successfully handles the first day.

Students will test you during this time period, to discover whether you are serious about the rules and procedures you have established, and whether you will keep your word and back up your threats. Be consistent in enforcing your expectations!

The preparation of materials is a continuing problem throughout the first year. Particularly during the first few weeks, you must find the time for the extensive preparation that is frequently required of a new teacher. Eventually, you will develop a better perspective on how far in advance you need to plan. Don't fall into the habit of keeping only one step ahead of the students.

Keep in mind that many of the challenges you face during the first few weeks are perennial problems of all teachers. These have to be solved anew each year, as you meet new groups of students. Other problems are unique to certain classes, certain individuals, or your particular situation as a beginning teacher. But whatever the problem, it must be solved as quickly and efficiently as possible, so that it will not continue to create difficulties as the year progresses.

These considerations, combined with the use of our problem-solving framework, should enhance the probability of your success in your first full year of teaching.

References
Chapter 5

Emmer, E., Evertson, C., Clements, B., Sanford, J., & Worsham, M. (1984). Classroom management for secondary teachers. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Evertson, C., Emmer, E., Clements, B., Sanford, J., & Worsham, M. (1984). Classroom management for elementary teachers. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Chapter 6

A Few Words About Your Working Relationships

Introduction

Our preparation of the Handbook to this point has relied heavily on the "research on teaching" literature. As you have seen, we tried in each of the previous chapters to help you understand the connections between your classroom problem-solving situations and the research base.

Our goals for this chapter are slightly different -- we focus on an immediate problem for which there is little research evidence. That problem, essentially, is the development of good working relationships in the school and community where you begin teaching. Particularly important are your relationships with the school principal, other teachers, and parents. In previous chapters we have argued for close collegial relationships with other teachers but little has been said about how to get along with, and understand, principals and parents. These are relationships that often give beginning teachers much concern and sometimes provoke quite a bit of anxiety.

To help "demystify" the principalship, especially in terms of his/her expectations concerning beginning teachers, we have done a bit of research. To put it simply, we conducted interviews with 15 high school and elementary school principals. To guide the interview, we posed a series of general questions concerning topics such as the following:

- Helping the beginning teacher get off to a good start
- Important things for beginning teachers to do to get started
- The principal as "boss" or colleague
- General expectations which principals have for beginning teachers
- Expectations regarding beginning teachers and parents.

The principals who participated were all from Virginia public schools. They were selected on the basis of recommendations from leaders in public schools, colleges and universities, and the Department of Education.

The material which follows represents a synthesis of findings from the interviews and our own experience and research with beginning teachers.

The Principal's Two Hats

In establishing a working relationship with your principal, you will probably feel some discomfort because of the dual roles that principals play. With very few exceptions, principals we interviewed state that they want to be seen as colleagues. At the same time, they acknowledge that sometimes they have to be "the boss" (see Figure 6.1). One principal summed up this dual role as follows:

> "I consider myself a colleague -- a resource person and evaluator. Obviously I'm the boss, but I try to develop a professional colleague approach, since we are all in it together. I try to take care of the whole, and I want the teachers to take care of the parts."

Figure 6.1 At different times, your principal will wear either the "boss" or the "colleague" hat.

The balance between the roles of colleague and boss can be a difficult one to achieve. This is true, in part, because of differences in the tasks associated with each. As a colleague, the principal focuses on being supportive and offering friendly advice. As a boss, he or she must evaluate teachers and sometimes make difficult hiring/firing decisions.

Principals we interviewed attempt to achieve this balance in a variety of ways. One stresses the colleague role, highlighting the "need to discuss what we are doing, to view each other as resources." This same principal considers it healthy if the

principal is seen as the "chief learner in the school." Another principal "resolves" the dichotomy by trying to portray himself as a "collegial boss." In this sense, the principal is the "teacher of teachers." A third tries to dispel the confusion by announcing that, "I'm wearing my 'boss' hat today." Most principals acknowledge that being seen as a colleague is easier in smaller schools. The need for an administrative hierarchy is greater in larger schools, where the "colleague" hat does not get worn at first. The hierarchy also seems to be more distinct in secondary schools than elementary schools -- in part because of size, but also because of differing organizational structures in two types of schools.

Whatever the case in your school, try to get to know your principal as a colleague as well as a boss. Principals are valuable sources of ideas and suggestions. If troubles do arise, a collegial relationship -- with open channels of communication -- will help ensure that he or she is supportive of your position.

The Principal as Frequent Classroom Guest

One way to establish an open, collegial relationship with your principal is to ask him or her to observe in your classroom. Keeping this in mind, we asked the principals interviewed, "Should the beginning teacher take the initiative to invite the principal into his/her classroom? When and under what circumstances?"

Our responses were unanimous and enthusiastic. If they had to be strung together into a single answer, it would be, "YES, ABSOLUTELY, SURE, SUPER, LOVE IT, IT WOULD BE GREAT." There is no doubt that such invitations are a key to your success as a beginning teacher. Principals want to be invited into the classroom and hope that a teacher will do it anytime, and for whatever reason -- whether they feel they are doing a good job, or just could use some advice.

Having the confidence to invite a principal into your classroom says a lot about yourself as a person, and as a professional. It shows that you care about teaching, and this message will far supersede any negative observations that may result. As one principal said, "A routine invitation would be the mark of a very secure person; it would be a splendid thing to do to get off on the right foot."

Of course, principals understand that you may not be anxious, so early in your career, to open yourself up for evaluation. This is only natural. And you may feel, if you are having problems, that you want to forestall your "evaluation" until things are running more smoothly in the classroom. We spoke with one principal who mentioned this issue of evaluation, and his words echo our own sentiment: "... it's better to seek advice right away, rather than have the principal come in later only to give an unfavorable evaluation." See Figure 6.2 for this contrast -- a word to the wise, you might say.

"You are about to enter a strange, new world . . . of order."

"With my luck, Dr. Jones oughta be stopping by soon."

Figure 6.2 These are the two main advantages to making the principal a welcome guest in your classroom.

For those of you who are a bit more timid, some alternate suggestions were offered. One respondent suggested videotaping a lesson, and showing it to the principal afterward. The advantage of this technique is that you do not need to show anyone the tape until you are happy with it. Another possibility, if it is the boss/subordinate relationship which rattles you slightly, is to first invite another teacher into the room. In this way, your record is not on the line, and you are still keeping in step with our notion of "beginning teacher as apprentice." Finally, if a visit by the principal is just too threatening for you to handle, try stopping by to chat with him or her about some of your concerns, ideas, or questions. The important thing is to establish a comfortable working relationship with the principal so that if problems do arise, you have a supportive administrator on your side.

Other Teachers as Friends and Mentors

As we stated in Chapter 1, your first year of teaching is, in some sense, your first encounter with "real" teaching. Your student teaching experience, while certainly valuable, really only provided practice in teaching. Now, for the first time, you have responsibility for your own classroom and group of students. You undoubtedly feel somewhat overwhelmed and could use a supportive hand and ear.

Most schools use an informal "buddy system" as a support for

beginning teachers. If your school has a buddy system, an experienced teacher probably will be assigned to you, to help you "learn the ropes." This person should be someone who knows both teaching and the school well enough to answer (and hopefully even anticipate) all your questions about the community, the school, and your own classroom teaching. Because a buddy teacher can be invaluable, we strongly advise you to seek one out if the school doesn't assign one. Look for a person who seems friendly and willing to help -- if possible, one who teaches in the same grade level and/or subject area as you do.

During the first few weeks of school, your "buddy" can help out with basic "survival needs." Ask him or her about crucial details such as where to get supplies and materials, how to fill out endless beginning-of-the-year paperwork, and what important administrative policies and procedures you should know. Also, your buddy may be familiar with the textbooks and teacher's manuals you are using. To reiterate our suggestion in Chapter 5, set aside some time to go over these together. A few minutes of explanation of the text's organization and structure may save you countless hours when planning your instructional program. In fact, ask any and every question that comes to mind. Information you get will go a long way toward easing your entry into the school community.

Once your daily classroom life settles down a bit, your buddy teacher can serve as a role model for teaching. He or she

can probably introduce you to some new teaching strategies and techniques. Also, your buddy undoubtedly has techniques for handling several of the specific problems you will encounter (Figure 6.3). Try to arrange observations in your buddy's classroom, and perhaps in the classrooms of other effective, experienced teachers. Beginning teachers find such observations invaluable, and principals will usually help to arrange them. As one example, a beginning teacher we worked with this year was having difficulty organizing and managing a three-group reading

"Why sure I remember my first food fight."

Figure 6.3 Your "buddy teacher" can serve as both a role model for teaching, and a means of emotional support.

program. At the school she student taught in, reading was taught exclusively with a whole group instructional format. Her principal arranged (in fact, suggested) a time for her to observe a colleague's reading program. She reported to us that the results were immediate and dramatic -- her own program improved overnight.

Finally, look to your buddy (and principal) for help in working with parents. As we discuss in the next section, parent conferences and other parent interactions may be new for you. Support and advice -- perhaps even a shared conference or two -- can be a big help.

Of course, your buddy is not the only teacher you should get to know. In fact, the principals we interviewed stressed that beginning teachers should try to establish rapport with other teachers in their buildings. Some principals plan or encourage a variety of social events such as pot luck meals, get-togethers at homes, and informal dinner meetings at local restaurants. Others designate a faculty bulletin board, and encourage people to post plans for social and professional group activities. Whatever the procedures at your school, make sure to participate in some of these social activities. Also, make a special effort to get to know other beginning teachers in your school or district. Because you will undoubtedly have several common experiences, you may find each other to be an important source of support.

Support Your Local Parents

An overriding concern among principals is that teachers should be professional with parents. This includes being "knowledgeable," "mature," "responsible," "portraying confidence" to parents, and being supportive and sensitive when discussing children. Beginning teachers (and all teachers) are expected to communicate as much as possible with parents, about both negative (unexcused absences, late or incomplete homework) and positive (an exceptional job on an assignment or test) things. One principal encourages teachers to use "glad notes," -- postcard-type memos that are sent home for the purpose of communicating positive things the child has done (Figure 6.4). Another reported that one of his teachers "calls one parent per night, regardless of whether there were problems that day." A third suggests that teachers join the PTA or PTSA. The point is to make contact first -- this will put you in a better position if problems arise later.

The principals we interviewed stressed that beginning teachers should not view parents as The Enemy. Rather, parents and teachers should work together to accomplish the same goals. One principal went so far as to suggest, "If you have the parents with you, there are no problems." One way to help ensure that parents are "with you" is through sincerity and concern. As one principal commented, "I want teachers to have a genuine concern

"Hey mom! My teacher said this is better than a good report card."

Figure 6.4 Positive feedback, directed to the parent, will improve your relationship with both student and parent.

for the child. If you can convey that, the teacher has a friend in the parent, and the kids take on the attitude of the parent." Another suggested that beginning teachers should "get to know the child's home situation as soon as possible." Understanding the home environment can only improve your own relationship with the child. Focusing on a different type of strategy, another principal suggested that beginning teachers might "invite parents to be part of the instructional team," perhaps as a "room parent" or a member of an established volunteer program.

Of course, the principals we talked with are not the only people concerned about the issue of working with parents. In our FOCUS on "Communicating with Parents," we present many ideas drawn from the literature on teaching to help you establish effective communication with parents.

In thinking about the ideas in the FOCUS and the tips offered by the principals we interviewed, there are a few caveats you should keep in mind. While most parents are supportive of schools and teachers, some, unfortunately, are not. Also, some parents you encounter may have values and life styles very different than your own. For example, some may not have telephones in their homes, making communication a bit more difficult. Other parents may not feel homework is important, or they may not provide quiet areas, conducive to studying and doing homework. If you run into situations you are not sure how to handle, don't be afraid to ask for advice. As we've mentioned before, your buddy teacher and principal are excellent sources of support and ideas in working with parents.

Working With Your Local Community

Needless to say, parents are not the only community members with whom you will interact in your role as a teacher. If you are coming into a community that is very different from what you are used to, ask the principal, your buddy teacher, or another teacher who feels at home in the community to provide you with a briefing on what you will be faced with -- a profile of the

Communicating With Parents

Communication is an essential tool for the teacher to use in building a support base with parents. The teacher can use communication to keep parents informed, enlist their cooperation, and thus promote a better learning environment. Tips for fostering effective communication with parents include the following.

STYLE (How to Communicate)

Be professional in dealing with parents (avoid rumors and gossip).
Be assertive, yet flexible enough to take appropriate suggestions from others.
Be direct with parents; be clear in what you say.
Think through in advance what you are going to say.
Be able to listen to parents; show respect.
Be friendly.
Be positive with parents, even when discussing problems with their child.
Be sure to use plain English; don't "jargon" a parent.

CONTENT (What to Communicate)

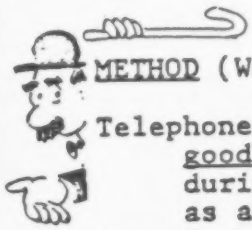
Learning -- Discuss activities in relation to short and long range goals. Let the parents know what their child will be expected to learn on a yearly basis and in each grading period. Let them know when major projects and tests are assigned, and when they are due. With homework, make the directions simple and clear for both child and parent.

Discipline -- Report to parents on-going discipline problems. Remember to be positive. Talk in terms of the action of the child that you wish to change, not the child. Report improvements as well!

Self Concept -- Keep parents informed about their child's social development. Discuss the child's ability to make and keep friends.

How Parents Can Help -- Give parents suggestions for helping their child at home (e.g., homework, behavior change techniques).

Class News -- Inform parents of events taking place in your class and in the school. The more the parents know, the less chance for any misunderstandings.



METHOD (Ways to Communicate)

Telephone Calls -- Call parents not only for problems but for good news as well. Calling each parent at least once during the year for good reasons will promote your image as a caring teacher.

Open House -- When meeting parents (probably for first time) be warm and friendly. Have samples of their child's work for them to see.

Newsletters -- Send home a newsletter once a week/month with pertinent information about class and school events. Newsletters are a good way to communicate your subject matter goals for the following grading period.

Notes to Parents -- For a successful accomplishment by the child, you can use a handwritten note or a preprinted form. These forms cover a variety of activities and can be purchased in many locations. If you need to send a note for negative reasons, try to be positive in your communication.

Conferences -- When having a parent conference remember the following suggestions:

- Greet parents in a friendly manner.
- Sit next to a parent, not behind your desk.
- Be direct and clear.
- Make eye contact.
- Begin with a positive comment about the child's performance.
- Have documentation.
- Have samples of work.
- Make suggestions for improvement.

Frequency of Communication

Communicate as often as needed.

Keep a record/log of notes, calls, and other communications to and from parents. Keep this record for documentation.

Finally, if you have any doubt over the communication you are going to send to a parent, discuss it first with your principal. Keep the principal informed of any problems you are having. This way the principal can be in a position to back you in case he/she receives unexpected communication from a parent.

school and the community it serves. Find out about available resources, as well as social and cultural norms that may affect your relationships with community members. Also, think about what you can do for the community as well as what it can do for you (Figure 6.5). In extreme cases, the principal may suggest that you consider how adaptable you really are to the community, and whether it is a good place for you to work (and live).

"What will I do <u>after</u> school?"

Figure 6.5 A beginning teacher's background may not be compatible with the community he'll be teaching in.

Staff Development and Inservice Programs for Teachers

Along with other teachers in your district, you will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of staff development activities. Typically, district level subject matter supervisors will provide some inservice training, possibly at the individual school level. Workshops or mini-courses will probably include suggestions about the curriculum, instructional strategies, and/or techniques for classroom management and discipline. School districts often identify issues such as instructional time, teacher expectations, or questioning strategies to be the staff development focus for a given year. There are also seminars and classes in surrounding universities on topics of relevance to practicing teachers; often, tuition assistance is available for teachers wishing to pursue outside classes.

Some inservice programs are self-contained within schools. One principal describes a program involving inter- and intra-class observation of teaching techniques. This school has a certain number of leave days allocated for observations. At another school, there is a set of 4 to 5 staff development programs designed by a committee of faculty volunteers. The advantage of these types of inservice training was noted by one principal, who said, "the training is coming from our own."

One-time projects such as microcomputer classes, or state seminars and conferences for specific subject areas (e.g., language, social studies, math) may also be available to you.

These will improve both your command of the subject and your knowledge of "what's happening" in the academic community.

To some extent, it is the responsibility of the principal to make you aware of staff development activities. However, don't depend on another person -- seek out the opportunities yourself. And make sure that you take the skills you gain from participation in projects, seminars, and workshops and incorporate them into your own classroom teaching.

Don't Do it All in One Year

As a beginning teacher, you should "want to be there to teach." One principal stressed that a beginning teacher should constantly be thinking, "I want to be a good teacher; I will be a good teacher; I will use all the resources at my disposal to be a good teacher."

On the other hand, you are cautioned not to "expect to do it all in the first year." Such expectations will inevitably lead to exhaustion and early "burn out"; you should accept the fact that you have years to go before you gain the "master teacher" status. Accepting this fact will keep you sane. It will also help you to see the importance of setting priorities -- of deciding where you'll put your extra effort and what areas you'll set aside for future attention. For example, one beginning fifth grade teacher said to us that she decided to really concentrate on doing an outstanding job in her social studies and creative expression classes. For these classes, she developed group

projects and many innovative activities. At the same time, she decided to stick closely to the refined texts and teacher's manuals for reading and language arts. She knew she could not work on making all classes excellent the first year, and planned to turn her attention to these two the following year. In this way, she got off to a great start, and avoided the frustration facing our young beginning teacher in Figure 6.6.

If you view yourself as an apprentice, you will not fall into the "I can be a master teacher right away" trap. In most professions, apprenticeships run for more than <u>five</u> years. Teaching is a subtle, difficult craft which you can only master

Superteacher in Action.

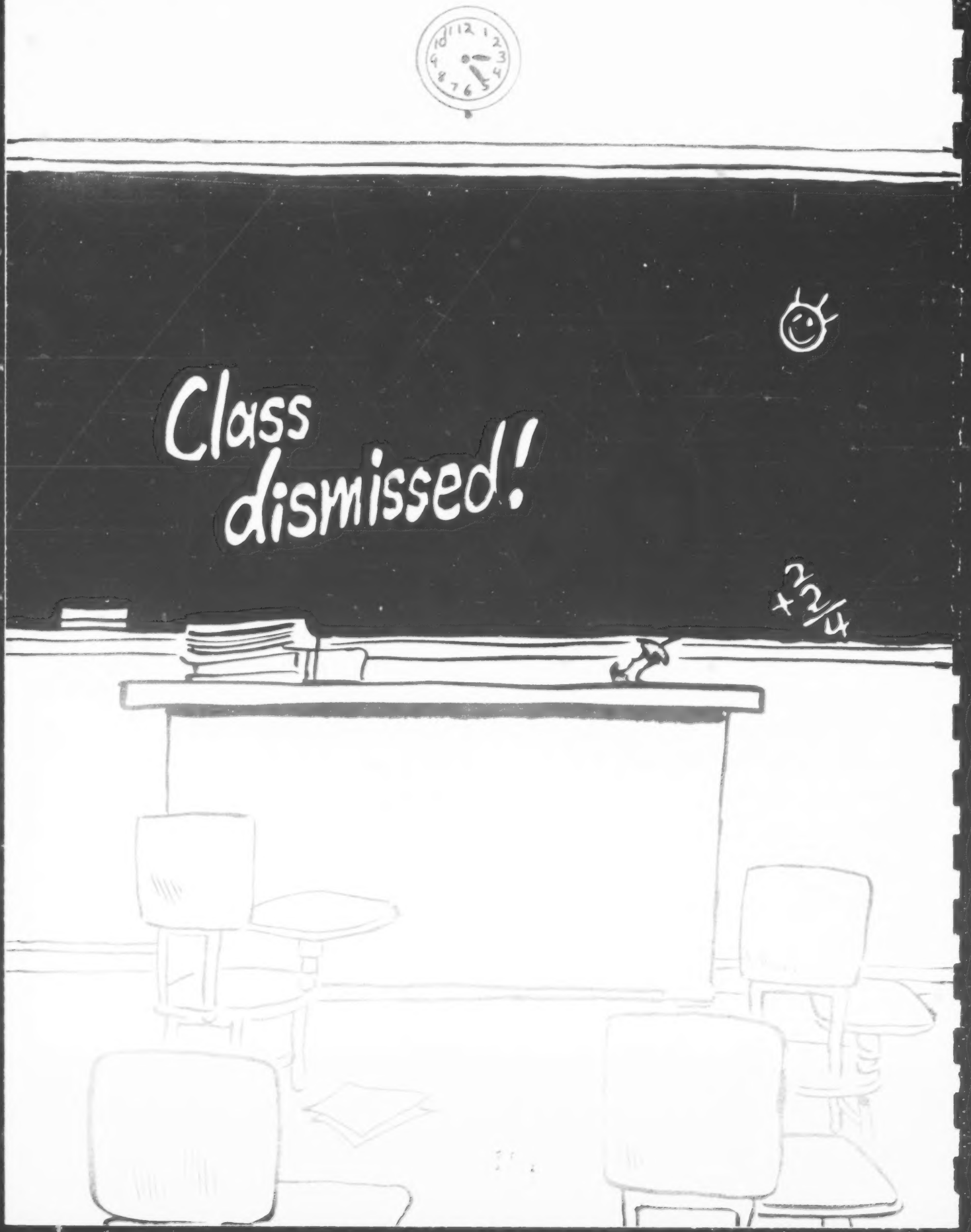
Figure 6.6 It is tempting, but frustrating, to try to "do it all" in your first year.

with a lot of experience, and repetitions of similar experiences. Remember that, in our chapter on Problem Solving, we stressed that the same solution to two slightly different problems will not likely work both times. So relax, and remember that it's OK (and inevitable) to make the mistakes that any apprenticeship requires.

By not trying to do everything at once, you avoid the common pitfall confronting the beginning teacher -- the feeling that, because you're making a zillion mistakes, you've chosen the wrong career and must immediately begin retraining yourself to be an accountant or computer programmer. The way to avoid this overreaction is to keep your goals realistic, and slowly rid yourself of the "novice insecurities."

And, of course, this attitude has the added advantage that it will probably put you enroute to "master teachership" in the fastest possible way. It will also help you to develop and strengthen the "Learning from Teaching" perspective we have stressed throughout the Handbook.

The Virginia Department of Education does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, handicapping conditions, or national origin in employment or in its educational programs and activities.


Class dismissed!
+ 2 2/4